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TAKE IT EASY

THE ART OF
RELAXATION

BY

Walter B. Pitkin



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Preface

On your seventieth birthday will you still be pleasantly active in your career, or will you have retired to a wheel chair? On your eightieth birthday, will you enjoy life with a certain zest peculiar to that age, or will you have departed from this earth?

It all depends upon your skill in spending your vital energies. Be you ever so richly endowed with ancestors of the utmost robustness and great age, you still may cut off your calendar by unwise strains and foolish stresses. And if you came into the world with no more than average heritage, you will die young unless you master, fairly early in life, the art of work.

One half of this art has to do with rest and relaxation. A sadly neglected half-art, this! A few sharpshooters have taken pot shots at it and have scored in the outer rings of the target. One inquires into worry and its abolition. Another considers the mechanics of muscular fatigue. A third studies the finer tensions of muscle fibres. All well and good, as far as they go. But there is need of a comprehensive sur-

vey and fairly minute analysis of rest and relaxation in their relation to common efforts, to attitudes, and to philosophies of life.

On such a foundation many people can—if they will—improve their technique of work to the point at which they accomplish two or three times as much as previously *without the slightest extra effort, discomfort, or loss of time*. Does this sound like an advertisement for a patent medicine? Well, it may; but it is sober fact and can be demonstrated over and over to any skeptic's satisfaction. Before you dismiss the statement with scorn, why not try some of the methods suggested?

This little handbook has been written for people who are working too hard; for people who worry; for people who lie awake nights and stare into the dark; for people who grow tired early in the day; for people who complain of aches and pains all over; for people suffering from various common digestive disturbances; for people whose hearts compel them to go easy; for people with high blood pressure; and for that multitude whose only trouble seems to be the fidgets, the jerks, and the jumps.

In short, I am addressing about half of the white race; and it would seem that the number of readers yellow, black and brown grows daily, if we may judge by the suicide rate of Japan and Southeastern Asia. If one out of every thousand who need the instructions here

set forth studies my pages, I shall be pleased.

To simplify the text to the utmost, I have omitted almost every reference to authorities and scientific books. Scores of people have given me valuable records of their own experiences, but I have mentioned few by name.

WALTER B. PITKIN

August 1, 1935

Toward the Easy Way of Life

I

EVERYBODY seeks some Easy Way of Life. It must be one which gives the highest possible satisfactions at the lowest possible cost in human energy, in time, in money, in self-respect, and in all the other orders of value which the seeker accepts as valid. And it must disturb other people as little as possible; otherwise it becomes immoral.

Schools have not taught such a Way of Life. They have taught a hundred useless things and not a few absurdities. Only of late has there been a fair start toward this supreme goal of education. Hygiene, preventive medicine, and the use of leisure gain ground in classrooms and foreshadow a better day. Meanwhile the world goes awry. Millions once well-to-do are now poor; other millions have lost something of their old self-respect through having to accept public and private doles; and still other millions turn criminal out of desperation. The entire world grows tense, anxious, unsure of itself and of its future.

In such a crisis, what must be done to

regain paradise? How work back toward an Easy Way of Life?

The Easy Way of Life has been found by him who has mastered two grand arts: the art of living with himself, and the art of getting along with the rest of the world. These arts interlock at so many points that they appear to be one unless you scan shrewdly. Many a person goes far with one but makes little headway with the other; and out of this uneven progress much unease and disease arise. To think too much about yourself and too little about the rest of the cosmos gives you a perspective in which you take on preposterous dimensions. To think too little about yourself and too much about the rest of the world may earn you a million dollars but leave you with a diet of crackers and milk, finished off with melancholy.

We agree with Socrates that the unexamined life is not worth living. But we add that an unexamined world is not worth living in. Then we go still further and take the modern scientist's position, implicit in all research and all technology: we maintain that, in the long run, he best pursues the Easy Way of Life who is keenly aware of the greatest possible number and variety of experiences and who also analyzes each experience as deeply as time and circumstance permit.

Most people have hazy, unworkable philosophies of life simply because they have not

worked hard enough over them. They have been lazy in gathering facts, stupid in their observations, sloppy in drawing conclusions, timid in practising what they preach, and altogether too willing to accept somebody else's mandates and opinions. They dislike intellectual labor as thoroughly as they shirk unpleasant duties and evade uncomfortable truths.

Is it not true that a woman will spend ten hours over her bridge game for every minute she will devote to her deeper outlook on life? Will not a man sweat by the hour trying to cut his golf score by one stroke, yet refuse to spend five minutes discussing a major issue of life and happiness?

I do not expect a sudden increase in clear thinkers and courageous men as a result of this book. Most mortals now alive spring from races which, since our species began, have had to struggle cruelly for a bare existence. They have neither known nor even suspected the Easy Way of Life. Hardships have dulled their wits and numbed their nerves. Hundreds of years will pass ere the masses will evolve and practise intelligent philosophies of life. Meanwhile let us talk to the few.

II

The Easy Way of Life, like the art of medicine, breaks into two grand divisions, one remedial, the other preventive. Each has its own

techniques. Neither can be pursued after the manner of the other.

You drink polluted water and come down with typhoid. The doctor starves you, doles out a trickle of ice water and maybe does something else to cure you. This is remedial technique, a way of cure.

After you recover, you decide never again to get the dangerous fever. And now what do you do? Do you go to bed and starve on an ice water diet? Hardly. Life wouldn't be worth living on that basis. You shun polluted water and all food which may have come into contact with the source of the disease.

So with the evils of uneasy tension. Once you become taut with worries, fears, fatigue, blasted hopes, or what not, you must cure them. Somewhere in your body muscle fibres have gone into a spasm which you cannot break. You are tight, not in the sense of drunkenness but in the physiologist's sense of having a rigor that cuts off the proper flow of blood, makes certain actions hard or even impossible, and creates the vague, panicky feeling of "having something wrong with you."

How remedy this uneasiness? Well, there are several techniques, each useful for a particular class of tense muscles. You may be relieved by following the ingenious methods developed by Dr. Edmund Jacobson, in his little book, *You Must Relax!* Or you may resort to

sedatives or to a complete escape from your home and business or to some deeply probing psychiatric treatment. It may turn out, on the other hand, that a tooth ulcer has caused all your trouble, so out with the tooth. Endless the variety of disturbances leading to taut muscles. Almost endless the cures.

Now, suppose that you come through a nasty session with taut muscles and resolve never again to suffer from them. What should you do to prevent recurrences? Isn't it plain that your technique here must be distinct from that of breaking down tensions already set up? You must now learn how to shun the conditions and influences which cause tensions.

You have three broad stratagems here. First, you may run away from the disturbers. Secondly, you may recondition your body so that it resists them easily. Finally, you may work out ingenious methods of compromising with the devils, of allowing them to upset you just a little in one manner but not at all in a more serious fashion. The first and second techniques, as you soon will see, are wholly unlike every technique of breaking down a taut muscle. The third, however, does involve this latter art to a certain degree.

Now, I am much more interested in preventing the evils of tense living than in curing tensions as they arise. I am still convinced that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of

cure. Important as it surely is to treat tense people and to relax them, isn't it a hundred times more important to show people how to avoid becoming tense?

You avoid the Hard Way of Life best by developing a well-rounded, consistent philosophy which immunizes you against most of the evil stimuli. It is a matter of education, first and foremost. Or, as I like to call it, the Well Balanced Life. Once you have become upset, your philosophy may fail to cure you. Only sloppy thinkers believe that a good preventive must also be a good remedy. But, once you have found your bearings in your world; once you have learned enough about yourself to regulate your diet, sleep, daily work, friendships, sports, serious reading, love life, and all the rest of the business of living, you have equipped yourself with shock absorbers. You take the bumps along your way without a quiver.

At all times men have worked out for themselves religions and philosophies, in the hope of making life smoother. These have been preventive techniques, as a rule. A few, notably in India, have also developed remedial arts. Man is a philosophizing animal chiefly because he must get his bearings in order to maintain his balance. This may be his supreme misfortune. But it is his only salvation too. Wisdom is the governor of his power plant, conserves his power, smooths its flow, and prolongs the life

of the machine. It may not repair all the worn parts, but it postpones the day of repair.

The better the philosophy of life, the more fully it regulates every least act. Hence the greater the efficiency of the philosopher. If born with a mere trickle of energy, he accomplishes ten times more with it than anybody else who has not thought things through to the bitter end. Many a frail wise man has achieved more than the burly brutes who have risen to power, only to find themselves incapable of smooth straight-line action. The common observer is misled by the performances of thinkers. He attributes to them superhuman funds of vital force or transcendent intelligences. Yet there may be nothing more than clear self-understanding and an iron discipline at the bottom of the thoughtful man's success.

III

When you relax, your muscles are limp. Now, can you achieve complete relaxation by making your muscles limp? Yes, without a doubt. But there is a catch in this statement.

Many muscles of your body are not connected with your brain in such a way that you can feel their tense or limp states at all clearly. You cannot hit upon any trick of tightening and loosening them at will. This is particularly true of the muscles in and around the organs of your body, including the eyeball.

People vary amazingly in this skill of manipulating these senseless muscles. Anybody who can fall asleep at a moment's notice is extraordinarily skilful. Less gifted is the person who can relax at will on the floor or in a chair. The rank and file, alas, are unable to break down quickly even the common rigors of attending to daily problems; they take their worries to bed with them and thresh for hours like a fish out of water. Mild insomnias are as prevalent as summer flies. And all because people cannot (or have not learned to) send impulses to the senseless muscles.

Is there nothing that such imperfect creatures can do to be saved? There is. Instead of working directly on the senseless muscles, let them learn the many tricks of attacking them *indirectly*. There are other ways of killing a cat beside choking it to death with cream. The nervous system, luckily for us all, has many more back doors than front doors. It has an infinitude of by passes, detours, levels, and other devious ways by which almost any given part of the body may be reached. This makes possible an amazing variety of attacks upon any problem of mind and body. It is man's highest salvation.

These indirect approaches fall into two large classes. You may relax by doing something different with your mind; and you may relax by doing something different with your body. Mere change of activity, if persisted in, will break

down many a tension. It will not dissolve every one. Sleeplessness may often be conquered by walking, by reading, by talking, by standing on your head—in short by almost any behavior markedly different from that of lying prone in bed. When this method fails, try a change in your line of thinking or revery. Mere wool gathering suffices at times. Best of all is the hard trick of thinking of nothing at all. The Hindus hit on that, and millions have proved its efficacy. Unfortunately, it's a tough trick to master.

But neither shift of behavior, bodily or mental, works nearly so well as the developing of a well organized attitude toward the world and toward yourself. A man whose philosophy of life is deep and firm, fitting his own nature precisely and reckoning with his own environment, takes things easy with little effort. It is this that the great religions of history have done for taut and troubled souls. Soon we shall inspect some of these broad outlooks; just now let me make clear how they succeed.

The basis of human behavior is found in the integrative action of man's nervous system. What is this formidable sounding function? I dare only sketch a few of its simpler features, for it is appallingly hard to put on paper. This much we may say though: each and every part of the nervous system is continually influencing and being influenced by each and every other part, and in such a manner that man adjusts to

the things and events around him as smoothly as possible. No single part or function is allowed to run away with the show. We dare not continue any one course for long, to the exclusion of every other course. Otherwise the environment would slay us. For it intrudes with something new and strange almost every hour of the day and night.

A philosophy of life, once well rounded by earnest practice with sincere convictions, links in with all modes of behavior. Its attitudes are frames of mind which also tend to organize every least act. Let a man truly believe that it is best to return good for evil; let him take the attitude of turning the other cheek on every hostile encounter, and surely he will release from his higher nerve centers impulses which organize themselves into acts of turning the other cheek, refraining from adding insult to injury, and so on.

Now, it is my contention—as against the physiologists who argue for direct relaxing of muscles exclusively—that a philosophy of life is more useful in dissolving the obscure and complex tensions than any drill with the voluntary muscles can be. I do not deny the value of such drill. I merely seek the easier way to the hard strains which are linked with deep emotions and those worrisome fragments of uncoordinated attitudes taken by people who have never thought things through to their bitter end. Phi-

losophy does not butter our bread, but it helps us digest it.

Let me put the same truth in another phrasing. A perfect philosophy of life would serve as guide in every crisis. It would amount to a supreme behavior pattern within which all possible lesser activities would be smoothly integrated. Very well! Would it not then release impulses which, taken all together, would adjust us as smoothly as possible to each and every situation, momentous and trivial alike? Would it not gain the most satisfaction with the least possible expenditure of energy and in the briefest time? So it would seem, as a matter of definition alone. As we approximate such an unattainable goal, then, we subordinate every least muscle to the Design for Living. When the muscle should tense, it tenses. When it should go limp, limp it goes.

IV

Prevention begins at the top and works down. It starts with a well organized mind that has learned to manage its body. But few people have well organized minds. Certainly not more than one citizen in a hundred, under the age of sixty, can boast of one. Our schools have totally failed to train minds thus. So have most homes. No wonder then that, in worldwide confusion such as that through which we are all struggling

today, most people go panicky, lie awake nights, try desperate measures, and end up sick or dead or miserable.

We cannot hand out a philosophy of life on a silver platter. It is not a dole. It is an achievement—nothing less. So tense people will not welcome it much more than a man with a raging toothache welcomes a discourse on the chemistry of decay. The best we can offer sufferers is a series of remedies which work from the bottom up—that is, from the taut muscle fibres up toward the mind. Luckily, the variety of partial and temporary cures is great. Luckily, too, the sufferer may start at almost any point in his body and eventually hit upon a type of activity which will help him dissolve the annoying tension.

To this second-best technique of relaxation we now turn.

What Are Tensions?

ATENSION is a strain in a muscle caused by contraction of its fibres. When you feel tense, you may have one, two, or several hundred muscles under strain. Some may be under control of your will, while others such as the muscles of your arteries, intestines, and heart, run themselves.

Whenever you move, you contract some muscles. The tensions need not be uncomfortable or harmful. All depends on the length of time they continue and where they are. A muscle that tenses and then relaxes in a moment or two never causes trouble. But even a very tiny muscle in an unimportant part of your body may, if long tense, become a plague.

Exceedingly small local tensions create more havoc than many of the larger, partly because they cannot be identified and consciously attacked. Our sensory system cannot register the time, place, and character of each tense muscle set. Often it records only secondary influences of the tension. Again it records nothing at all.

A cramp in your toe may alter your manner of walking so slightly that you do not detect it for days. Yet the shift of various movements

in other leg muscles which it may cause can start aches in your hip and a diffuse misery throughout your entire body.

The housewife who works at a table too low or too high may grow overwhelmingly fatigued and attribute this to overwork. Yet the efficiency expert knows that she suffers from simple local muscular tensions which she may not even feel.

Many typists grow irritable and inaccurate from poor posture or badly placed machines. They may attribute their troubles to over-exacting employers. But the root of the difficulty lies in tiny tensions in shoulders and arms of which the sufferers may not be conscious.

Sometimes local tensions may seem to have no connection whatsoever with the ensuing trouble. One of the most striking cases that ever came to my notice was that of my old friend, the late Clinton Gilbert, author of *The Mirrors of Washington*. He suffered for years from eye tensions brought on by an astigmatism so slight that corrective lenses could not be ground precisely enough to relieve the strain. Gilbert's days were ruined time and again by splitting headaches, onrushes of fatigue, and vague depressions. Finally, however, the astigmatism increased to the point where corrective lenses could be made. Then he struck his pace, which he later held until his death.

Throat tensions from slight tonsil dis-

turbances often make speech difficult through the imperfect coordination of minute muscles. The sufferer often tends to avoid people, or to be silent or even reclusive. His tensions interfere seriously with his social and business life. He often falls victim to moods and depressions based on a conviction of inferiority. An easy tonsil operation would remove the difficulty.

A tension may be caused by a bewildering variety of upsets. The diseased tonsil illustrates one type; the cramped typist another; Gilbert's eye a third. Hundreds of minute impulses flow from tiny points in the body where poisons have accumulated; these impulses tense some muscle—it may even be only a few fibres in a single muscle—and, of itself, the local disturbance may never come into consciousness. Its own sign may be some seemingly petty change of general behavior. The sufferer may grow slightly more anxious than usual over insignificant troubles, or he may walk unnaturally, or he may catch cold too easily, or he may withdraw from the society of friends, using some manifestly irrational excuse for his act.

A second variety of tensions like those of the cramped typist arise from the over-use of some muscles in work or poor posture at the job. The flow of blood may be reduced in one muscle as a result of the worker's bending over a desk or fixing his gaze by the hour on his working materials. The cramp may remain vague or it may

become acute and bestir the tense person to do something about it quickly.

A third variety arises from efforts to perform certain acts for which the organs or muscles are poorly fitted, such as reading a book from too great a distance, talking too loudly to an audience in a large auditorium, running beyond the limits of endurance, and so on.

A fourth variety occurs whenever some surplus or deficit develops in the body, as in hunger, thirst, sexual thwarting, overwork, and the like. The body either has used up energies of some kind which must be replenished or else it has stored up energies to the limit of the reservoir and must discharge them somehow. In simple hunger there is a deficit of food; the stomach grows tense at its upper end, and the feeling of this taut condition is the feeling we call hunger. To relieve it, we must eat. Oddly enough, though, the tension eases up if we starve long enough; but this results from the stomach's releasing juices under the excitement of hunger. These juices temporarily break down the tense condition—that's all.

In sexual excitement, the tensions are the reverse of those in hunger, in that the underlying need is for sexual discharges of energy. It resembles hunger only in so far as the normal stimulus to bring on the energy discharge is the presence of some special object. In the stomach this special object is food; in the sexual organs it

is the contact of the organs of the opposite sex.

There is much evidence to support Kempf's hypothesis that all organic needs and other urges set up currents which tense some muscles of the body; and that when the muscles attached to the major organs are tensed, the effects appear in consciousness only indirectly and through some medium of imagery more or less symbolic. These involuntary muscles are not neatly connected with our sensory centers and our higher brain controls; so their disturbances seep in unclearly, and we try to discern and decipher them, but with little direct success. They appear to us through a glass darkly. Our dreams and fantasies of waking life are, so Kempf believes, only distorted visions of organs seeking relief from intolerable needs.

We cannot study these autonomic tensions in this little handbook. They belong to the medical student and the psychopathologist. Our concern is rather with the simpler varieties of tension which I pointed out a moment ago and then with the more easily visible constellations of tensions which are set up by our tyrant, the brain.

THAT TENSING TYRANT: YOUR BRAIN

No man can serve two masters.

A house divided against itself cannot stand.

Psychologists have long been debating this question: does the environment run the human brain, or do the organs run it? Physiologists and physicians conclude that the environment runs it, while psychoanalysts hold the other opinion.

In my opinion, both are wrong. The chief trouble with the human race today is that man's brain is run sometimes by the environment, sometimes by his organs, and sometimes by both in a hopelessly incompetent team play. The brain is, at every moment, being influenced by the blood stream that keeps it alive and by *the autonomic system, which determines variously the intake and output of animal energies.* But it is also being stimulated by the steady stream of lights, sounds, pressures, and chemisms coming from outside the body. These two great fields of force usually overlap, blur, and result in psychic confusions, now grave, now trifling.

When we say that a man's emotions color his judgment of affairs, we are implying that his brain is trying to serve two masters; hence it is a house divided against itself. Seeking to deal with a situation that calls for clear, cool analysis, the befuddled fellow cannot even observe details accurately; for his anger or his attitude of indifference toward something or his unwillingness to accept opinions from somebody stands between him, the judge, and the affairs to be judged

like a sheet of wavy, discolored, translucent glass.

Again I must vex you with difficult statements about the brain. Try as I may, the facts simply refuse to take on the short and simple phrases of a tabloid newspaper. Somehow the human nervous system remains much more complex than the literary style of those who read and write tabloids. This is my misfortune no less than yours. Let us endure it bravely.

Man's large brain gives him little peace except in an indirect manner. It causes most of our restlessness and prevents relaxation. *How does it play this scurvy trick? Simply by combining elements of experience into hundreds of thousands of patterns and then starting currents from each brain pattern into a set of muscles.* Most of these currents are so swift and so faint that we never notice them, except as ideas. What we do not realize is that even the most trivial idea always brings with it a pulsation of muscle currents. This is one of the most important discoveries in modern psychology. It has been confirmed over and over in many ways by many investigators. It does not mean what some radical behavioristic psychologists think, namely that the idea is nothing but the patterned movement of muscles. It simply means what it says: ideas, to become distinct, must be brought to us on a wave of movements.

Whatever comes floating through our

minds, then, has a movement of its own. This remarkable adaptability leads to all sorts of complex tensions, especially among superior people. For the brain is too swift and complex and versatile for the muscles which it runs.

While there are eight or ten billion cells in the cortex, each connected with each of your muscles, there are only seven hundred muscles in the body. The cortical cells are linked with one another in inconceivable complexity. When you make the slightest muscle movement, several hundred thousand of these brain cells are directly involved. But the number of possible combinations of even these hundreds of thousands of cells staggers the imagination. And the complexity and variety of muscle movements are as nothing by comparison.

It is the magnitude of our elaborative mentality that makes relaxation so hard. The large brain has flung an immense web over the lower levels, and its interlacing of associative systems has grown as dense as jungle vines, making dark the ways of the animal mind. I incline to believe that animals below the anthropoids keep well simply by responding directly to each disturbance of the body. They do not *know* what is wrong with them, in the sense that a surgeon knows a patient has goitre. They directly experience the evil somewhat as you and I perceive our own hiccoughs. They also experience the

paths of recovery—and this, to us, is the mystery that would be lucid, but for our overcast cerebellum and thalamus.

When the bear comes out of his den at the end of a winter, he walks over to the spring grass and eats herbs which tone him up. No reveries, no idle imaginings, no anticipations, no diversions of intellectual curiosity obfuscate the simple fact that his emaciated body must regain its balance with the aid of herbs. I refuse to call this herb seeking an instinct. I think it is much simpler; it is a simple perception of a state of affairs.

To the awakening bear, objects must be terrifically vivid, immediate, and meaningful on a low level of significance. To us most things are blurred, uncertain, and grotesquely equivocal. It is, in fact, part of the great brain's function to make things equivocal and multivalent. Each thing we know stands in innumerable relations to other things; indeed, to the greatest minds an object is a myriad of things at once—a hat, a tradition, a constellation of molecules, a galaxy of electrons, a commodity.

Multivalence blurs everything. We experience so much in each thing that we go lost in the forest of our own planting. The seeds of thought sprout all around us as we move along, and soon we are hemmed in.

**BRAIN CONTROL: "ONE THING AT
A TIME"**

If you responded to all these hundreds of sights, sounds, objects, situations, ideas, feelings, emotions, and the like, you would be literally "out of your mind." How, then, do these innumerable associative processes of yours relate objects to your wants and needs? Through the control of your brain.

In seeking appropriate satisfactions and avoiding unpleasant stimuli, energy is constantly checked and inhibited and diverted into other channels. You restrain your muscles, and refrain from responding to all but a tiny fraction of the stimuli that disturb you, and you reflect, consider, and finally use your energies in organized activity.

Whether or not your activity satisfies you and relieves your tensions depends first on your understanding the situation to which you are trying to adjust yourself. This means attending to it and relating it to your entire field of experience, habits, and appetites. In this phase of action, you get your balance first whenever you see, hear, feel, taste, or smell, any object. If you fail here, especially in seeing and hearing, serious tensions are set up, for they prevent your recognizing sights, sounds, and the like as marks of people, things, or situations. But if your sensory impressions are keen and accurate, through your

cortical control you at once make many preliminary tests and considerations of various plans of behavior, without carrying out these tests in full. An infinite variety of combinations is brought into being.

It is important, then, for you to learn the art of attention. For only through this first phase of receiving accurate and well-chosen sensory impressions can your brain control your behavior effectively.

To attend best to anything, cultivate the habit of restful attention. Otherwise you block the passage of sensory impressions through the nerve channels to the brain.

Have you ever watched a school teacher commanding her class to sit at attention? Or have you seen soldiers line up to stand at attention? If so, then you have witnessed a psychological blunder of the first rank. Or—let's be more precise!—it is a blunder in so far as the aim of attending is to develop a genuine interest in or knowledge of the thing to which pupils and privates must attend. It may not be wrong if the purpose is merely to read off the orders of the day. But this is seldom the case.

Formal sitting or standing at attention interferes with the mental processes of perceiving, analyzing and learning. The more complex the subject to be mastered, the more serious the interference. To sit stiffly erect, elbows in, head back, eyes right, is to set all muscles tautly. This

makes the entire body rigid, reduces circulation of the blood, especially in the extremities, and thereby tends to stall the psychic engines up in the great brain. For these operate freely only when the channels of their energy discharge—which are mostly in the muscles—are wide open.

Sitting absolutely still may bring on unconsciousness. Holding a single sensory organ absolutely still quickly puts it out of business. I used to practise this trick with my eyes. I was able to refrain from winking and from moving the eyeballs long enough to make the entire field of vision go black—and stay black until I chose to move. While it is much harder to anesthetize other organs, still it can be done more or less completely; and this gives you a fair notion of what happens in the rigor of formal attention.

Watch this man attend to a difficult matter. I spent an evening with him last year and spent more time watching his mind work than performing my duty, which was to report to him certain conditions in the country affecting one of his many businesses. He is a man of enormous wealth, all of which he has earned by a rare combination of shrewdness and engineering skill. He uses his time and his energies with extraordinary economy, as you will now see.

As I began my report, he slumped in his easy chair, closed his eyes, and dropped his head upon his chest. He seemed to be in a stupor. I spoke for perhaps forty minutes, during which

time he gave no sign of life. As I finished, he came to in a flash, asked a few questions about points I had made, and within three or four minutes shaped his final judgment on the whole matter. I had to agree with him. He had comprehended the entire report, had analyzed it while I talked, and had reached his conclusions on the spot.

To accomplish this, he had to relax utterly. To relax utterly, he had to cut off as many irrelevant stimuli as possible; so he closed his eyes and gave his ears the right of way. Somehow he inhibited every impulse to speak to me. He was entirely submissive, so far as I was concerned. He soaked up my remarks as impersonally as a sponge soaks up water.

What does this mean? Simply that what I had to say found a free path to everything in his memory that related to it. Thus, step by step, a web of facts was woven. As it took form, my listener watched it without trying to add or to take away the least item. He stood in its presence quite as objectively as you might stand in the presence of a spider and watch the creature spin its web. Thus works the truly judicial mind always. This is the Easy Way.

Tricks of Relaxation

LET NATURE TAKE HER COURSE

YOU are tense. You cannot rid yourself of the plague. You cannot wait to learn a whole philosophy of life. You want relief at once. What can we do for you?

Well, let us drop all theory and plunge into our First Aid Kit. Let us start at the bottom and work up.

When any serious disturbance endangers your sheer animal health, the body works automatically and strenuously to restore balance. It casts out nine ailments in every ten, if left free to do the job in its own way. It draws on all of its own secretions to kill invading bacteria or to repair torn tissues. It floods the troubled region with blood and raises its temperature, the better to slay the foe. At the same time, it remains still through all of its members. Any motion whatsoever interferes with the healing, for a motion is made by muscles tensing. As they tense, two things happen: blood flows through their fibres less easily, and the taut muscle as a whole presses or strains upon some bone, sinew, vein or artery,

thereby lowering all activities in such at least for a moment. But each lowering of activity tends to block the free flow of the healing secretions and the blood.

Hence the more you "let go," the better your chances of prompt recovery from upset and illness. This is first of all a problem of relaxation. And its importance is increasingly evident in the proper handling of a vast number of disturbances that ordinarily are treated only by medicine or surgery. Nobody yet knows how far some relaxation technique will help. We know, of course, that it never can do everything. Yet in almost every case, relaxation is a first vital step toward recovery.

Have you ever watched a sick dog? If not, do so. Learn from the animal. He crawls away to some quiet spot, curls up, keeps as still as a stone, and dozes away the hours—yes, even the days and weeks! Sometimes he first hunts around for grass or herbs to eat. Sometimes he vomits and thus lightens the burden of his healing task. But the main part of his self-treatment is a rest cure—no mistake!

Learned men call this "the instinct of self-preservation." I call it the simple perception of illness and the equally simple perception of its treatment. The dog is not confused as we are by our immense associative brain, which clutters up our stream of consciousness with ideas and our muscles with errant impulses. The dog's mind

concerns itself simply and directly with getting well.

Few of us can do this save through severe training. Hence doctors often find that medical advice fails with tense patients. When persuaded of the importance of relaxation, however, intelligent people frequently develop a tranquil attitude through sheer determination to recover as quickly and completely as possible. Thus with a friend of mine, one of the healthiest and most energetic men I know.

At fifty-seven, he fell five stories down an elevator shaft. He was nearly mashed to a pulp. His internal organs were displaced and pushed against the backbone. His foot was crushed. For months he lay in a hospital, wretched and helpless, apparently getting no better. Finally a great diagnostician advised the patient thus: "You were physically perfect when you fell down that shaft. Probably you will be nearly as good as new if you will give yourself a chance to recover. I can give you only one piece of advice: You must lie on your back from one to three years, and you *must* relax."

To many people the prospect would have been terrifying. But the sufferer realized that here was probably his last chance for complete recovery. So he set about figuring how he would spend these long months on his back.

He had money enough to live for two years without working. So he moved to his coun-

try home, where he had a special bed set up in the living room. He then checked up on all the work he had ever done or begun since leaving college. Old notebooks, manuscripts, books which he had long intended to study, and all material bearing on his work which he had never had time to cover he piled up beside his bed. For a year and a month he lay on his back reading over old student notes. This done, he caught up on important reading. Finally, as the diagnostician had predicted, he emerged completely well into a world lost to him for two years.

The other day he came in to see me. I commented on his remarkably healthy appearance. And he told me this story of his months of relaxation, to which he owes his come-back, if not his life. Today he is busier than ever before, and, except for a limp, is almost as good as new.

Relaxation is an aid in the treatment of even such serious afflictions as locomotor ataxia. Dr. William J. M. A. Maloney * has used muscular relaxation exercises here with success. He found that the ataxic is usually tense with uncertainty and fear. Complete relaxation not only calmed the anxious patients, but led to a fall of blood pressure and often to sleep. The clearest proof of a complete let-down was revealed in the eyelids. When they quivered, the patients were uncomfortable or distracted, while the pulse rate

* Reported in the *New York Medical Journal*, May 23, 1914.

and blood pressure increased. Both dropped, though, when the lids were still.

HOW GO LIMP?

How relax? Edmund Jacobson gives us the paradoxical advice: "Do not *try* to relax! Just stop trying!" He is right, of course. To try to do anything is to set some muscles for action. What we seek is inaction, laxity of muscle, immobility without a trace of rigor. So we must suspend the will.

More easily said than done! (Hence books on the art.) But you make a fair start when you simply *imitate a restful person*. Become an actor! Put on a playlet for me, please. You take the part of Buddha—or if that serenity is too much for you, try the part of a lazy black stevedore drowsing away his non-union life on a Mississippi River dock. Study the character action. Rehearse it often. Get the feel! Get the feel! And now you're on your way.

It's a delicious feeling, soft, warm, empty (in an untranslatable sense). More like that of deep sleep than anything else. A second-best imitation of it occurs when you bring back a rush of blood into your foot, which has fallen asleep, as we say. You may manufacture this experience in the following manners.

When weary of pounding typewriter keys, my fingers ache just a little. Then I know it

is time to stand up, relax my arms, then snap them just as if I were cracking a whip. My hands are snapped like the tip of a whip. My fingers, all limp, snap against one another until they tingle. The blood rushes to their tips. A pleasant tingle and full feeling ensue. In a minute I am ready to thump the old keys again.

When weary of sitting over a desk and reading manuscript until my shoulders ache faintly, I arise and whirl my arms from the shoulder sockets as fast as I can. Of course, I relax the arms as much as possible. This works beautifully.

If I happen to ache all over from some special sort of toil too greatly prolonged, I pursue the old trick of the professional dancer. Do you know it? Wonderful! Stand up. Spread your legs apart, far apart. Bend forward until your head hangs as closely to the floor as possible. Now make your arms and neck limp. Then shake head and arms laxly. Behave as if you were brandishing a rag. It's strenuous at first try. But after a while you get results that are a joy, and then you begin to like it.

Now, try to imitate this wonderful fresh feeling of full-blooded extremities, and you are on the way toward relaxing all over. Advance now to one of the oldest and best proved tricks. Lie face down on the floor and, as the children say, "make yourself heavy." Do you recall that schoolyard game of going limp all over, thereby making it impossible for even the strongest boy

around to pick you up? Well, see how well you can do this now. It is, when well done, a perfect relaxation.

Keep at this until you can "make yourself heavy" at any time and place. Then you are one of the elect to whom the gates of the kingdom open.

It may be, though, that you are moulded in another pattern which calls for a reverse technique. Thousands are. This reverse consists of breaking down tense muscles by setting up opposed impulses and integrations. Instead of letting go, there is a positive breakdown followed by relaxation. Opposed behavior is possible without standing on your head. It may be pursued in any single part of the body which happens to be tense. If you get ordinary eye strain from too long or close reading, you may ease it merely by turning from the page, going outdoors and looking away at the horizon. A thousand times have I done this with quick success. (It won't work if there's anything wrong with your eyes, of course.)

If you do delicate work with your hands and grow tense over the task, shift quickly to the big arm muscles. Thump a punching bag for a minute. Lie down and lift yourself twenty times with your arms alone. Flex your biceps fifty times, as hard as you can, if there's no opportunity for other exercise. If these don't relax your hands, follow Jacobson's technique of tensing

them as tightly as you can, then slowly easing up, over and over.

Several people tell me that they best relax from the strains of office work by driving their automobiles fairly fast out on the open roads. I join them in this testimonial. And I have studied the mechanism of release just enough to see how simple it is. You must keep your eyes on the highway, your hands on the wheel, both feet ready at the pedals, and some lively part of your mind on cars behind, cars ahead, traffic lights, motorcycle cops, and what not. Each position and each act differs greatly from your office routine. The coordination as a whole gives your body a wholly new set; hence the let-down that soon ensues. To all this, add the important fact that I get the let-down fastest if I ride alone. For if there is a traveler to whom I must talk, the impulse to speech breaks in and corrupts the pattern of escape.

We see the same principle in the carpenter who flops in his easy chair and reads a dime novel, and in the author of dime novels who finds rest pottering away at carpentering. Dime novel tensions are broken down by hammer-and-saw behavior. Hammer-and-saw tensions are dissolved by dime-novel reading. In each instance, the would-be relaxer finds a fresh focus for his mind and body; and concentrating on it shifts all his muscle tensions.

So too with the more serious breakdowns

which are cured by the vigorous pursuit of a handicraft. A man deeply depressed and brooding over real or fancied troubles is a man plagued with profound tensions, many of which he cannot locate because the muscles tensed are not directly linked up with sensory nerves. Put him at work in a woodworking shop or a garage, and you have him on the road to recovery. He must focus on a material object outside of himself. Around it he must organize his muscles. As he does so, his attention shifts away from his own troubles. Then the tensions these troubles had induced begin to pass. Here you see the essence of all occupational therapy.

When tense with worry, a magazine editor I know examines the electric wiring throughout the house to make repairs and changes. Or else he tinkers with the radio. A busy administrator finds complete relaxation through digging in his garden.

Sometimes a simple little trick is enough to break tensions. William Beebe learned one such in South America. Through it he attains complete ease. He tried squatting on his heels, as he had seen the natives do. He found three positions which he could, by alternating, hold for hours without fatigue. He could squat with his chin on his knees, or flat-footed, with his arm-pits on his knees, or else on the balls of his feet, with the elbows on his knees. Through these

methods, he learned to shift and relax every muscle.

THREE EASY WAYS

May I assume you to be familiar with the two obvious helps to relaxation, simple massage of tense muscles and the application of heat to them? And may I also assume that these simple methods will help you only when you can readily locate the tension and can reach it? They are best for a pain in the neck, for cramped fingers, for stiff legs, and the like. Often they render indirect service too; a general massage can sometimes break down tensions in muscles not accessible to rubbing or to hot pads.

Massage is an art in itself, so I cannot set forth all its techniques here. Do not imagine for one instant that any mere rubbing or pinching of a muscle will relieve you. Method here is everything. Study it in any reliable book at your public library, if you cannot afford professional treatment.

Heating the tense area is much surer than massage in those cases where the tense spot cannot be located or reached. Some physicians recommend baths as hot as can be endured; and I have often found these useful, even for obscure and distressing conditions such as eye strain and gastric spasms. Study your own reactions here with care. You do not endanger yourself

with a hot bath, and that should embolden you to experiment freely.

Most of us do not stretch enough. The act is so simple that even a cat does it with ease and grace. Its wholesomeness is known to thousands who have preserved the art. Cheap and inoffensive, it deserves popularity.

We have found that the two best times to stretch are the minute we pull the bed covers up over us at night and the minute we wake up in the morning. Of the two times, the first seems to be more propitious. I have come across several people who stretch as a regular method of falling quickly asleep.

When you stretch, stretch all over. Stretch with your whole heart as well as with your whole body. Turn the toes downward in best ballet dancer's style. Stiffen the arms up above the head and straighten the fingers. Stretch a while lying on your back. Then turn over and stretch all over again. Stretch till it hurts, too! I mean this quite seriously.

Some people tell me that they get the quickest let-down by stretching a while and then slowly relaxing all over, repeating this double trick several times in the course of fifteen minutes or more. As for me, I can get more ease of body out of one first-class stretch than out of a quart of ale.

Everybody ought to practise rippling the abdominal muscles until the latter become as

strong and as flexible as the well exercised arm. The discipline should start early in life and continue relentlessly. For it will surely prevent many a tension in a part of the body peculiarly liable to grave disturbances. The simple operation massages everything below the diaphragm, forces the blood to livelier circulation, sets up muscle reactions, and does everything else that serves as a local stimulus.

Just what must you do? Well, it is hard to describe the precise movements in written language. So I may help you at the outset by suggesting that you imitate a first-class "belly dancer," a hula-hula girl, a hoochie coochie, or whatever you may call it. Begin by contracting the muscles just above the navel, but leave the lower muscles limp. You may strive to do this for months and not succeed at all. It is a very tricky act. You probably will be driven to the second best procedure, which is to pull in the muscles above the navel while you actively thrust out the lower abdomen. You thus produce a first-class imitation of a pot belly. (Need I add that you must not practise this stunt directly after a meal? You may rue the adventure.)

Next reverse the pattern. Relax (or thrust outward) the muscles above the navel, while contracting (pulling in) the lower region. This produces a comic imitation of an early pregnancy. After weeks (or even months) of practice at these two acts, proceed finally to the

rippling. You now endeavor to send a ripple from the top of the abdomen downward and then back upward. Don't be discouraged if you cannot do it easily for several months. You must build up the individual muscles first.

Persist, and you will some fine day be amazed at the strength of your abdominal muscles. They can be developed until they are as hard as a board. You can allow a friend to hit you below the belt with bare fist, if first you have drawn the muscles taut. (Better try hitting yourself first, though, for a few months.)

Having mastered this trick, you proceed to use it—and how? Whenever you feel tired or strained or worried, start rippling at once. It sounds foolish, doesn't it? So do many other wisdoms. But try it out honestly. Then judge for yourself.

Simple Relaxatives

LET your own nature guide you in exercise. Your energy, health, age, and the type of work you do count especially here. Many healthy people take no exercise whatsoever, though they are often in the open air. They prefer watching a baseball game to playing, seeing a tennis match to batting balls furiously on the court, shouting at a horse race to riding. Fresh air is often enough for the relaxers who enjoy themselves best as spectators.

Often, though, the right kind of exercise properly supervised breaks the serious tensions of nervous upsets and breakdowns better than anything else. Cases like that of the young journalist who recovered from nervous collapse through fencing are by no means rare.* Her experience is particularly enlightening, for it illustrates the value of exercise requiring deft motor and mental coordination to break down the complex tensions of shattered nerves.

The young woman suffered anemia and a near nervous breakdown apparently from sheer overwork. She was ordered to stop writing

* Reported in *Physical Culture Magazine*, October, 1933.

for at least a year, to rest in the country with plenty of air and sunshine, and to live on a strict diet for the entire period. But she couldn't afford such luxury! At her wits' end, and seeing no possibility of taking time off to recover so expensively, she happened to meet an old friend, a French fencing master. This worthy, a graduate of a French physical culture school, persuaded the girl to follow his instructions for six months, at the end of which time he promised to have her back in shape as good as new.

The program began. She stopped working for a month. She went on a simple diet, and each day for a week lay in the sunshine on the roof of her apartment house. Then she gradually began easy exercise and the fundamentals of fencing.

The new skill had for the semi-invalid many advantages: first, it required little space, and hence was well adapted for exercise in the city; next, it required intricate and varied deftness and so did not become monotonous; thirdly, its mastery demanded keen muscular and mental coordination.

At the end of a month, the young woman reported an astonishing improvement. Today she is cured. She still fences regularly for an hour a day, outdoors when possible. She has achieved marked success in her field, and is virtually a new human being.

Exercise breaks the tensions of "high

pressure work" in business. Whether business men are high-pressured into exhaustion and complex tensions through sheer bad management is beside the point. They become tense partly because they are overburdened with tasks, in any case. And what happens? They are flooded with thousands of conflicting impulses—to telephone, to dictate letters, to see people, to draw up new schemes for promotion, etc., etc. None of these impulses has the right of way, and a horde of tiny forces, poorly organized, sets up tensions and unbalances. These are relieved only by somehow reducing the number and the intensity of the competing impulses and by aiding straight-line action. Exercise often accomplishes these ends.

Mild and easy exercise is best for most men over thirty-five. Many boast of their strenuous games during lunch hour, only to eat their words later when they collapse of over-exertion. They pant away at indoor tennis, volley ball, golf, or some other exhausting sport only to get back to work feeling "tired all over."

Are you a business man? And over thirty-five? Then leave such strenuities to your youngsters. (But advise them to watch their step, too.) Unless you are unusually healthy and energetic, confine your mid-day exercise to a walk in the sunshine. Walk at least a mile, and preferably two. Breathe good air deeply. Keep away from streets crowded with autos and people. Take it easy as you go. Bear in mind that hard

physical exercise requires both high energy and adequate time for recovery. Often this means lying down for a while, or even a nap. Probably you haven't time for either. Your enterprise in trying to keep fit through strenuousness may be commendable. But your hygiene isn't. Confine your sports to times of day and week when you can loaf afterward if you like. And never follow any exercise that fatigues you unduly.

Unusually healthy people accustomed to heavy physical exercise seem to suffer little or not at all by giving it up completely for a time. Thus with Henry Smith Williams, that remarkable author-surgeon-ornithologist-scientist and prolifically gifted super-man. Williams is now in his late sixties and has been all of his life a fine athlete. At sixty-five, when I last heard from him, he was one of the most physically fit human beings I have ever known. Up to 1930, he had not spent a day in bed for fifty years, nor lost a day's work through illness.

For weeks at a time, he would train daily on the mat and keep as well in trim as a professional wrestler. But for long intervening periods, he would sit at a desk eighteen or even twenty hours every day for months together, taking no exercise whatever beyond an occasional minute or two of muscle flicking and opposing. (Probably you call it stretching and straining!) For a three months' period in New York he took no exercise at all, often not going

out of the hotel for a week at a time. And yet he was accustomed to using shovel and axe and scythe energetically hour after hour on his New England farm. When he returned there from his city visit, he reported that he seemed to be in rather better trim than when he left!

This adaptability of habits of exercise he once explained to me: "Being extremely abstemious in diet, I am able to do without exercise and yet keep fit, as no one could do who overate."

Most healthy young people of both sexes need fairly hard exercise to help relieve two kinds of tensions. They are tense first of all from sheer surplus energy seeking outlet. Especially if they are superior adolescents of high energy, this surplus makes them often vaguely confused, tense, and restless. A host of intellectual impulses compete with one another, while at the same time their bodily vigor seeks constant and intense muscular exertion. All such youngsters should exercise as they like, with the two exceptions of football and rowing, both of which often overtax even the sturdiest of youths and may lead to serious later trouble—or even premature death.

Sex tensions plague the young, too. And these are greatly relieved by exercise of the large muscles. The tensions may not be completely broken. But the shift of both attention and of energy flow aids in relaxation. Young people

naturally pay much attention to everything related to sex; and this, of course, makes them tense. But the tensions are exaggerated by the pernicious practice of indulging in sex expression up to the point of intercourse and then inhibiting consummation. Or, if they practise intercourse, they suffer from anxiety over consequences. Adolescent breakdown seems to grow more and more frequent as a result of these tendencies.

What advice is best here? All depends on the individual. Generalities are dangerous. But we may safely recommend to any healthy young person all the techniques of relaxation in this book, especially hard physical exercise, hot baths and cold showers. If the disturbed young person will spend less time sitting in an automobile and more time walking miles every day, that will help. The evil effects of the automobile upon sex life cannot be exaggerated; and not the least among them is the everlasting posture of inaction. The human frame was not designed for such indolence. Its large muscles are its natural channels for the discharge of energy. Shut off the outlet, and trouble ensues.

It is a matter of common observation that those people who have the fewest things to do let their minds run to sex. Busy people and versatile people are seldom absorbed with love adventures, even when they happen to be highly sexed. The more competition among their interests, the less any one interest rules them. So,

you see, it is well to build up many interests and urges in many directions, always including a few which drain off the flood of youthful energies.

THE NAKED TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

And now a kind word for the Nudists!

It is easy to relax when naked. All your muscles move freely. No tight collar to check the flow of blood. No belt about the middle to interfere with digestion and nimble movements. No cloth rubbing you raw somewhere.

But the mental effect of being naked surpasses the physical. When fully dressed, you have put on much more than raiment. You have donned the attitudes and manners of a tailor-made culture. You may think you are yourself, but you aren't. You are a pattern animal. You can no more be yourself now than you could if you were made up as a clown, tossed into a circus ring, and told to make the audience laugh. In a deeper sense than most of us realize, clothes make the man. They unmake the essential man. They blot out the unique personality. For clothes are the very heart and soul of Convention.

Now, every herd rule, in so far as it imposes upon the individual duties and manners which do not come natural to him, sets up tensions somewhere in him. To conform is an effort. Some spontaneous impulse must be checked. Some other impulse must be started by brute

force. The outward grace of free movements vanishes. Men become puppets. They do not walk; they goose-step. They do not converse; they echo the books of etiquette. Life becomes mere manners, which are the lowest form of life.

Nudism often is a blind animal impulse to throw off restraint. The worse the restraint, the more likely the reaction. So, you may well guess, Nudism has flourished for many years in Germany. There the individual has always been most cruelly forced into a mould designed by his rulers. He has been regulated until little has been left of his original nature, at least little in his everyday outward and visible conduct. I am convinced, after having lived four years in that now-stricken land, that the German stiffness, the affectation, and the notorious tendency to adopt crazy cults, wild ideas, and extravagant practices are largely motivated by the same elemental wish that has created Nudism. This is the simple wish to cast off everything that has been put on us by other people.

Casting off clothes is more than a symbol of this rebellion. It is medicinal. And in people not yet crushed by herd rules and rituals, it may be an excellent preventive of serious tensions.

Is it entirely a coincidence that Nudism began to attract thousands of Americans when hard times drove us further and further into government policies of regimentation, codes,

and bitter doles? I think not. The nature of man makes him react against unnatural commands. It leads him to throw off everything which other people make him do or have or think—or wear. As he discards the alien substance, he grows less tense. As he relaxes, he feels better. He is himself again. Not poetically, but physiologically and psychologically.

I am not seeking to convert you to continual Nudism. I merely call attention to the prophylactic value of the totally exposed skin. I might fill many pages with testimonials for this never patented medicine. Many people tell me that they go naked for some time almost every day, in order to keep relaxed. Here is one society woman who confides that, for many years, she has always gone around her own home nude during the two afternoon hours which she inflexibly reserves for relaxation. Here is a well known author who does most of his writing dressed only in deep thought. Here is a scientist who declares that he does his best intellectual work either during or directly after a few hours of warm nakedness, as he lies on a rug before a sunny window.

I suspect that millions of sensible people fling aside their clothes during waking hours. Most of them have no fine theories about the beauty of the human body or the emancipated psyche or the released libido. They go naked simply because it feels good. And that's reason

enough. Analyze it, however, and you find that it means that people relax or keep relaxed most easily when bare.

Try it. Maybe it will not work out well with you. You may have a dressed-up personality which shrivels when exposed. But I hope not.

As we cannot all run around naked without upsetting business, art and morals at one fell shock, let us come as close to nudity as our culture permits. Wear the lightest and loosest garments we can find.

Women take the lead here, not because they are adept in the art of relaxation but for other darker reasons. They have steadily reduced the weight of their clothes toward zero and seem now to have attained the Nadir of Near-Nudity. Men lag in their ponderous woollens and gratuitous vests. Were some master tailor to take his fortune in his hands and try out a five-pound *tout ensemble* for males, he will have my support, editorial and financial, from the start.

THE LITTLE FOXES SPOIL THE VINES

Call me the champion of lost causes if you will. Still do I sing the praise of suspenders and denounce the belt as a barbarian device. The artist in relaxation will have none of this deceptively innocent snake-in-the-grass. It wraps itself

around you at the very place where you need freedom. It is the Python of Fashion which cuts off the blood from this morning's meal and makes afternoon dull. If you make it loose enough so that your insides can be themselves, the miserable strap loses its grip upon your pants, and great is the downfall thereof. There ought to be a law against belts.

As for suspenders, they fall short of perfection. Infinitely better than belts, they concentrate the burden of nether garb too much upon two narrow strips of shoulder meat. So I sit and wait for the coming of a sartorial messiah who will give us males external garb of one piece, after the manner of the famous union suit, the most rational of all raiment. Then we can relax, be ourselves, and go singing through life.

And then collars! Good God, what fools men are to bind about their necks those ugly, stiff, tight bandages of serfdom which the trade calls the white collar! Years ago I cast the odious things aside—and should have done so years earlier, had I been able to find anything else to don. Today the rebellion against them runs strong. But the Collar Trust (there must be one, I'm sure) slyly slips them back into show windows and traps the young, the unwary, and the addle-pated. Many a tense hour has been caused by these chokers. Maybe a happiness has been soured just enough to spoil a day. Away with the infamy!

Then the too bright lights in your office. The telephone. Ah! Yes, the telephone! But I mustn't get going on that. There'll be no well rounded volume on the art of relaxation. I must control myself.

It is the thousand and one petty annoyances of an unregulated environment which tense us mostly. Men face war and pestilence serenely. They go singing into the fury of shell and shrapnel. They shrug their shoulders as the hangman slips the noose around their necks. The very majesty of great evils lends a majesty to their victims. But let one mosquito sneak into the bedroom; let a window creak in the night wind; let a hand organ grind away beneath the office window; let the postman hand us a letter with two cents due on it; let the grocer send us a monthly bill on which two items, totaling 18 cents, appear which we did not buy from him; let the radio get out of order and screech like a tormented foghorn in the middle of a symphony; let a few hundred more events of such lesser magnitudes transpire over a month's span, and the human spirit crumbles.

Horace knew what it was all about when he wrote that it was the little foxes that spoiled the vines. He must have lain awake all night listening to the noise of some distant squeaking window shutter.

Nobody can list all the simpler tricks of preventing a tense life. You would first have to

catalogue all of life's little irritations, from mosquitoes and rattling doors clean through to whatever lies at the other end of the sombre spectrum.

I give it up. Be your own doctor in these matters. But don't overlook slippery floors, cracked windows, clattering milkmen, leaky faucets. . . .

Find your own pet plagues and stamp them out.

Healthy Habits

THE EASY EATER

EAT wisely and relax! We are the first people in all history to have all we want to eat and drink, in the widest imaginable variety, and at amazingly low prices. Hence it happens that we are also the first people to be painfully over-energized by calories. We pour horse power into our blood stream faster than we can use it. So we become tense in a peculiar fashion. We are ever under an inner pressure to be up and doing.

The American factory worker devours almost three times as much nutritive energy daily as does the Japanese soldier, who receives one quart of rice a day, with a nibble of fish, radishes, and other insignificant items. Set this mess down on the dinner table beside the fare of the Chicago mill hand, and you will see at once where we get our restless energy. Then turn your gaze to the heap of sugar that goes down the American gullet, and you may wonder why we do not blow up with a bang. Sugar passes over fast into the usable form of glycogen. Stored up in the liver, it is released into the

blood stream at high speed, and, if taken in too large quantities relative to volume of energy expended, over-energizes the body and sets up corresponding tensions.

Now with too much energy inside of us and with an overstimulating climate all around us, we must take steps to avoid the tense life. Two courses seem obvious. First of all, we must have wide, deep channels through which we can release our great funds of energy. Then too, we must store up energy in a form that jazzes us least of all. The former course requires a plan of work and play suited to your personality—and this we shall be discussing at length in another chapter. The second course requires a calm diet—and for most of us, this means milk.

Drink milk and relax!

In a manner little understood but often observed and verified, calcium makes "pep" and corrects upsets in the inorganic equilibrium. The American diet is notably deficient in calcium, and it is possible, though not proved, that certain characteristic tensions derive, at least in part, from a low calcium metabolism. Recently Donald Laird and James A. Stephen studied for a month the relation between calcium content of the blood and emotional tone in four healthy young men. Daily records revealed that two of the subjects felt a rise and fall in emotional tone that corresponded with the rise and fall of calcium in the blood. High calcium accompanied

happy, cheerful, optimistic emotional states, and low calcium was associated with moodiness, depression, and pessimism. The other two subjects revealed less variation.

For many years I have observed my own calcium behavior and can confirm these findings to a dot. Milk contains abundant calcium in an easily assimilated form. I always crave it in great quantities; but, for some obscure reason, I have often been unable to drink more than a glass a day. (I used to drink a gallon a day, as some of my farmer relatives still do.) Luckily though, I can take a great deal in various special forms such as custards and chocolate malted milk.

When, for any reason, I go on short milk rations, I find it harder to relax, harder to fall asleep, and harder to maintain a pleasant attitude toward my work and toward the human race. Give me a quart a day or better, and I am another man—sometimes a third cousin of little Pollyanna. The dietitians are right when they urge milk on you. It is not only nourishing. It soothes and makes restful work easy.

Keep nitrogen in your blood and relax!

Calm people have an almost uniform supply of soluble nitrogenous products in their blood at all times. Excitable people have a large supply on one day and a low supply on the next. This difference turns out to be an aspect of a still larger difference in the character and veloc-

ity of sundry energy transformations somewhere between the intake of energy from food and the final consumption of energy in activity (especially in the muscles).

Which is cause, and which effect? Does the style of metabolism give rise to the evenness of soluble nitrogens in the blood? Or is the reverse the case? The answer is surprising. *Either condition may precede the other.* An excitable person may be calmed down by kindness, by flattery, by assurances of his safety, and what not; and, as his calm increases, his blood nitrogens tend toward uniformity, just as in the constitutionally calm person. Likewise with the latter. Excite him violently, not once but often, and you thereby send his blood nitrogens shooting up and down more or less in the pattern of the excitable person.

Nobody can tell you how to keep a full supply of blood nitrogen on hand. Maybe you can find a way for yourself, but I doubt it. Anyhow, if you happen to be excitable and hence tense at times, you might look into this matter. If you find something, let's hear about it.

If too strenuous, eat less meat and more vegetables. The humble potatoes, beans, corn, peas and lettuce, together with all their kind, generate about 10% less body heat than meat does. Vegetables therefore slow down the basal metabolism and slacken our pace. This is why

vegetarian or nearly vegetarian peoples are less active than meat-eaters.

Don't expect that a shift from meat to vegetables will change your tempo over night. It will not. It takes several years of dieting to produce a marked drop. Some investigators say that seven years must pass before the full effect occurs.

Whenever possible, eat amid pleasant surroundings. Think and talk of pleasant matters. Converse at leisurely pace. Avoid serious arguments.

Never eat when frightened, worried or angry. Better take a walk and calm down before taking a chance with an upset stomach.

The controversy over fast and slow eating has not yet ended. I know some reader will write in denouncing me as a faker because I report—as I now do—that recent studies show that milk sipped slowly is not assimilated more easily nor more rapidly than milk gulped pigishly. Animal products may be safely devoured much faster than the heavier vegetables such as carrots and beets. Fish can be eaten as fast as tender, ripe fruit. I begin to suspect that the only danger in fast eating is the tense state in which the eater is likely to continue as a result of speeding. How serious this is, I do not know. Neither does anybody else on record.

SLEEP

Sleep is man's only perfect relaxation. And falling asleep is, in a healthy person, one of the pleasantest experiences. The whole body lets down its tensions and finds relief from all striving. Some shrewd men use sleep as a short cut to new perspectives and plans. When harassed, they go to bed and stay there until free from worry and puzzles. On arising, they often find their problems solved.

Falling asleep is almost entirely a matter of relaxing the muscles. Heavy physical labor wearies the muscles and hastens easy sleep. But heavy mental work often causes insomnia through over-attention. We may attend excessively to anything whatsoever. The excess becomes serious when and where the muscles used in attending interfere with other urgent activities. The high-speed brain worker, especially the man who "carries a lot in his head," often finds it difficult if not impossible to get to sleep simply because his head buzzes on and on. His brain centers are not fatigued. They cannot be. But his muscles are.

How doze off? You must not over-attend to anything. No pat rule holds for all. Some people count sheep. Others are driven mad by such monotony. The 358 eminent Americans who told Donald Laird how they fall

asleep when wakeful adopt the following methods:

One-third of them use some form of "thought control."

One-quarter of them read books and magazines.

About 18% of them relax their muscles directly.

About 4% take warm drinks.

Another 4% smoke.

Another 4% take hot baths.

About 3% use drugs.

About 2% use alcohol.

A case study shows that "thought control" is only a special form of direct relaxation. It begins at the brain end instead of at the muscle end of the tension. So, in a sense, we would get a truer picture if we were to add the two groups and say that about 51% adopt direct relaxing techniques, while all others adopt some indirect method.

"Thought control" may involve anything from taking the completely submissive attitude to weaving patterns of thought congenial but far removed from the day's routine. Probably thought control accomplishes most through breaking the tensions of habitual associative patterns, and using other patterns less often called into play. Thus, the sleepless bookkeeper would only make matters worse by juggling arithmetic as a means of wooing sleep. The restless stenographer would thrash about while mentally

pounding the typewriter keys. But were both to think about some hobbies that interested them, provided they were not overexcited thereby, or to reflect on a silly movie, or to recite poems, they would have better luck.

Studies of sleep habits investigating the knack of going to sleep have brought to light all sorts of sleep formulae, good and bad, sane and crazy, new and old, original and common. Nearly all such morphiates, however, are the prescriptions of people who have trouble in sleeping. The obvious source, though, of effective rest potions is not among the exiles of relaxation, who plainly do not know how to rest. What about the habits of those who sleep perfectly?

A casual study of my own brought to light many people who are never troubled by sleeplessness. But most of them use various techniques to doze off. Mind you, these are not the deliberate methods of the insomniac. Rather they reveal nature in the raw doing her own perfect job. Certainly you nightwalkers should gain some valuable suggestions from these healthy sleepers.

Most frequently, our reporters revealed the mind wandering off into a wonderland. At first it was a conscious, wakeful, but not deliberate fantasy. It conjured up some beautiful or amusing, but always impossible scene, circumstance, or event. It speculated with the various

possibilities of the scheme, or constructed elaborate and fantastic details. Then the fantasy became a dream—and came the dawn!

If we look into the good sense of this program, we find an important element behind the complete mental relaxation of such techniques. The mind cannot suddenly go blank. The mind awake is always thinking of something. And any serious thought is stimulating. To sleep, however, you must avoid being stimulated. Hence you must find a substitute for serious or important thought. You must not take your daily cares to bed. Any personal thought is serious. Not only does unhappy thinking keep you wakeful, but happy, jubilant, enthusiastic thoughts plague more people seeking slumberland than do dour, monstrous omens. The success of this wonderland of fantasy lies in its impersonality—in its unimportance to waking hours. There is nothing to fret, frighten, or excite you in thinking of the impossible. So tonight, when you crawl under the covers, start conjuring up a Looking Glass Land. Hold a conversation with Tweedledee and Tweedledum. March down the beach with the Walrus and the Carpenter. Or imagine yourself as the Supreme Mogul of the Universe, and decide how you will run things. The end to the lovely story will be the jangle of your alarm clock tomorrow morning.

Fantasy succeeds with the insomniacs,

too. Many of our "subjects" were forced to make a special effort each night to rid their minds of stimulating thoughts. Some of their techniques seemed distinct from the Wonderland system, on first sight. Yet careful examination revealed some sort of fantasy carefully disguised.

Counting sheep is really a shepherd's wonderland. But it offers the dubious attraction of being monotonous and often fatiguing. Use it, then, as the beginning of a fantastic tale. Don't count those sheep that leap over the foot of the bed. Rather notice how they differ from one another. Look! Here comes a black one! There is one without a tail! The next one is apparently lost. He pauses and tries to run around the bed. Now he jumps over! Here come six abreast! What! They are talking to one another! Three of them are for dipping sheep, and three are against it. Now that big green one in the middle with a horn in his nose is changing the conversation. He wants sheep to breed boll weevils. Says cotton is the sheep's biggest competitor. Says cotton is the sheep's biggest—says cotton is—says cotton—says—zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.

Or take a short story. Make one up or read one. Then crawl into bed and start rewriting it. Switch the characters and keep the circumstances. Keep the characters and switch the circumstances. Make the villain marry the gal.

Make the gal betray the hero. Make it tragic. Make it comic. Get up, you lazy fool, it's seven A. M.!

As with the sheep and the Walrus and Tweedledee, giving life to inanimate objects and endowing animals with human attributes offer a ready vehicle for the background of an amusing fantasy. There are limitless methods of playing with the scheme. Plan a world in which the inanimate and the animate change places. Picture plants and trees and rocks going about human business, and let the gardens in which they grow contain rows of stationary men and mice. A fertile brain should find numerous sources of amusement and diversion in adding detail to the plan.

What if fantasy fails? Many people relax best through a profoundly submissive attitude. Here is a case from my own records. A middle-aged woman, employed in dull office work, regularly breaks all tensions through prayer alone. When worried, she prays. When over-burdened with work and made tense thereby, she prays. And when sleepless, she prays. For her, prayer is the "only correct solution" to her problems.

Here is a forty-eight-year-old secretary who spends her days in a job that bores her to death, according to her own statement. She learned to relax when young, so she compensates for dull days by social interests and reading.

Seldom afflicted with sleeplessness, when she cannot doze off, she recites the Twenty-third Psalm. If too weary to go to that mental exertion, she says, "I use a little phrase I learned twenty years ago and which has served me well ever since in times of sorrow, death, disappointment, etc. That is—ALL IS GOOD." This, of course, is another variety of the submissive attitude. Methods like these are effective for people who relax best through recognizing, at least in private, the apparent source of tension, and secondly, through being sincerely convinced that the Lord or some other power assumes responsibility too great for the weak of his flock.

Most sophisticates cannot take this path. And while they use "thought control," their methods are subtler. Here is an enterprising physician. When he tosses and turns, he "plans the same short story over and over, trying each sleepless night to make the story better, always starting from the beginning. The more inane the story, the quicker I go to sleep." A busy college president, when over-excited from a hard day's work, always reads heavy literature, such as an involved book in cost accounting, engineering, or chemistry. Many people, however, would be over-stimulated by such ideas and problems.

Simpler by far are techniques like that of John Cowper Powys who fixes his mind on inanimate objects when he doesn't go to sleep

promptly. An editor with a sense of humor gives himself an intellectual chastising. He "threatens himself to arise or even to change the position in which he happens to be lying," and adds, "I call this my perversity complex." Whether complex or not, it works.

A government official has developed his own method of relaxation and inducing sleep that is similar in many particulars to Yoga practices.

"During the war," he reports, "I began to develop a group of defenses against strains of all kinds. They consist of periodic complete physical relaxation during the day, sprawling back in my chair with absolutely every muscle relaxed, including the muscles of my tongue. You can get the same effect by putting your head on the desk and honestly trying to go to sleep for two or three minutes. I have trained myself to go to sleep for ten-minute periods at almost any time, letting legs, arms, and hand muscles relax and leaving hands limp over the arms of a chair. I go to sleep at night by relaxing my tongue muscles and mentally starting to take a walk through my country garden noting things as I go. I fix my attention on each individual shrub and tree, beginning at the back porch. I pause a moment to study its shape and color—then, before I know what's happening, I'm asleep."

If methods like these fail you, test those practised successfully by hundreds of peo-

ple. When troubled with sleeplessness, Lowell Thomas eats less before going to bed. Others find a light lunch turns the trick. A young editor swigs a highball and becomes drowsy at once. If alcohol stimulates you temporarily, avoid it, of course. Most people, however, are relaxed by light wines and beer. A middle-aged librarian always inhales deeply and soon thereafter falls asleep. When disturbed by noises, many people stuff their ears with cotton-and-wax balls. Some wakeful folks relax best through physical exercise, such as a brief walk before bedtime. Others take a bath at body temperature. Others doze off after a warm drink. If all such easy methods fail you, try simple bromides, preferably under medical supervision.

Though few scientific studies have been made of the relation between diet and sleep, Donald Laird contributes * an extremely significant experiment on the effect of a heightened calcium metabolism, within the normal range, on the quality of sleep.

Calcium is more important and more neglected in the American diet than most people realize. It is high in milk, cheese, almonds, dried beans, egg yolk, oatmeal, rice, and other foods too many to list here. The calcium metabolism requires both calcium and phosphorus, vitamin D and its equivalent formed by sunshine.

* *Medical Journal and Record*, December 6, 1933. "Calcium Metabolism and the Quality of Sleep."

Laird made his experiments during the winter, when calcium metabolism is at its lowest. He studied the quality of sleep among subjects whose diet was alternately deficient in calcium and then supplemented with food concentrates containing about equal amounts of calcium and phosphorus, as well as Vitamin D, to increase the calcium metabolism. The concentrates were taken three times a day at mealtime. The subjects were observed daily for eight weeks, and during the periods of high calcium metabolism, the following results appeared:

“A larger proportion went to sleep immediately;
Fewer were kept awake for a while by ideas running through their heads;
More woke up spontaneously the following morning (a sign of being slept out) ;
More felt well-rested on getting up;
Fewer were easily irritated on getting up;
More felt ‘peppy’ on getting up;
Fewer had a taste in the mouth on rising;
And, fewer were hungry on getting up.”

Laird finds that the quality of sleep is consistently better when accompanied by normally high calcium metabolism; that the sleep of people who are not aware of sleep deficiencies can be improved; and that the level of calcium

metabolism markedly determines the quality of sleep.

If, therefore, you are a restless sleeper or have difficulty in getting to sleep, try increasing your intake of foods containing calcium, phosphorus, and Vitamin D. Get out into the sunshine often, especially in winter. You need not seek food concentrates. Simply drink more milk, if it agrees with you; eat more cheese, and other foods rich in the requirements of a high calcium metabolism. Study the quality of your own sleep. You may be reasonably sure that your diet is not over-abundant in calcium.

If all ordinary diets fail, then ask your physician whether you may not benefit from highly refined halibut liver oil combined with viosterol. It contains about 80 times as much Vitamin A as there is in an equal amount of ordinary cod liver oil. So you take only 10 to 20 drops of the compound a day. My own experiments with it are limited to my own person; they seem quite remarkable, though I have not yet carried the test on long enough to draw firm conclusions. But medical evidence as to the value of the preparation is very strong. In any event, be sure to seek competent medical advice before trying it. The concentrate may help you greatly.

Cultivate good health of body and mind. Experiment endlessly with yourself. The art of sleep is intensely personal. What relaxes me may fail with you and everybody else in the

world. Whether you pass on your troubles to the Lord or lose them in a highball or shut them out with cotton and wax or read Hindustani—if it works for you, stick to it!

NARCOTICS

And now for the ancient puzzle of liquor!

No well poised personality ever desires a drop of alcohol. To need the stuff is to confess to unbalance. True, the unbalance may be momentary; or it may be trifling; or it may have been brought on by freakish circumstances beyond individual control. But unbalance it is nevertheless. And alcohol may help to correct it. Whether, in the long run, drink proves the easiest way to relaxation is a question that cannot be answered except in the light of full details about the particular case. I believe that it is the best solution for millions of unfortunate people who have been badly educated or raised in violently fluctuating climates, or plagued with an inheritance of over-active glands. For all such the underlying rule is simple: drink only when you cannot get relief from tensions by simple exercise or a change of scene or a diverting activity. And then drink no more than absolutely necessary.

How and when shall you use alcohol as a relaxative? Again we must hammer on the

same old refrain: all depends on your nature. Some people are knocked silly by one glass of mild beer. To many thousands, alcohol is but a pleasant and harmless luxury. It has a purely neutral effect on still others. And many people, especially superior men and women who work at high tension and cannot let down promptly in the evening find alcohol their surest and quickest way of complete relaxation from the day's strain. The Demon Rum may be a gunman to you, a mere nobody to me, and a guardian angel to somebody else. Universal rules are silly. The wise doctor says, "There are no diseases; there are only patients." So say I: "There is no Demon Rum; there are only individual drinkers."

Obviously, if you suffer the agonies of the damned from the slightest portion of alcohol, this chapter is not for you. Your problem is simple: never use it in any form. We address only those of you whose systems tolerate and crave alcohol in some form and some quantity.

Before we discuss its value in relaxation, get into the clear on one point. Alcohol acts in general as a narcotic, not a stimulant. It disorganizes one's activities, especially when taken in heavy doses by people thirty-five or older. It relaxes not only the painful or distressing complex tensions, but the normal tensions of ordinary attention and activity as well. While it seems to have relatively little effect on the excitation of nerve cells, it interferes with the conduction of

currents along the pathways. Alcohol may yield temporary extra energy in the replacement of fats and carbohydrates and the protection of proteins. But these temporary benefits are usually offset by its activity as a depressant and irritant.

"But," you say, "a cocktail always peps me up. I *feel* stimulated. My skin glows, and I feel warm all over." This is only the first step in the total process of the absorption of alcohol into the blood stream. Soon afterward the disintegration begins. Even a dose of $2\frac{3}{4}$ ounces of whisky or $1\frac{3}{4}$ pints of beer impairs acts requiring skill or accuracy.

Haven Emerson * reports experimental evidence here. For ten days the subject of a series of tests went without alcohol, retired at eleven P. M., arose in the morning and threaded needles as fast as possible for twenty minutes. In the interval, he was able to thread an average of 179.2 needles. For the following nine days, this procedure was repeated. But now the subject consumed a total of 100 CC.'s of liquor, taken in doses of 25 CC. each in a 25% solution, at eleven P. M. The nightcap cut down his efficiency about 6% to an average of 168.2 threadings in the twenty-minute period. And repeated tests yielded the same results.

Increased quantities soon dull the senses, break down muscle and later nervous coordina-

* *Alcohol and Man*. New York, 1932.

tion, and finally result in heavy sleep or stupor. As a rough guide to relaxation, bear in mind that half a pint of whisky, gin, or other heavy spirituous liquor keeps one profoundly stupid for one hour, a pint of wine does the same, and a quart of beer does likewise.

Two opposite classes of people are drinkers, with different tensions and different consequences. Young people drink for a kind of excitement, as a rule, and seldom become habitual drinkers in youth. Cravings for alcohol quickly pass when liquor is not available. Older people, however, drink either to forget or to break tensions. They often fall victims to habitual alcoholism. And the tensions revealed in the craving for alcohol derive in the first instance from complex tensions successfully—if temporarily—broken by drinking.

Taken in moderate quantities, and especially with or followed by food, alcohol serves as a more or less harmless narcotic for healthy but over-tense people.

It is especially useful for a rather small class of superior people, some of whom I have observed rather closely. They differ from the rest of us in their fund of energy, their hard drive, their ambitions, and their fast thinking. They fall mostly in the top class of American business men, whose work calls for a quick pick-up in the morning, top speed activity during the day, and a quick let-down in the evening. They

include mostly high-grade executives, managers, and administrators, and, as a fringe around this crowd, a sprinkling of eminent engineers, editors, novelists, painters, publicity men, and similar professional workers. A few of them naturally hit a high pace early and relax easily at the end of the day. Many more, however, must have early stimulants, like tea and coffee, and late narcotics. Among them, a large number of men use alcohol moderately, which means not more than one or two drinks a day, as a rule. Few are steady or heavy drinkers, and only one is an unmistakable dipsomaniac.

If you fall within this group of workers, experiment with strong coffee twice a day, and a moderate amount of alcohol to relax. Coffee is, for more than half the world, a harmless stimulant. So is tea. Alcohol is for a smaller fraction a harmless narcotic, provided it is taken in small quantities. If alcohol relaxes you quickly, prefer beer and light wines to anything stronger. Make it a rule to eat either before or during a drink. Never drink on an empty stomach.

What about mixing alcohol with business conferences and important meetings where you must keep your wits about you? People differ greatly in their immediate reactions to mild liquor. Some are enlivened and mentally improved for two hours or more by a pint of wine. Others grow dull and sleepy with less than half that amount. All depends on your own vital

equilibrium. Nobody can safely advise you here beyond warning you that, as you increase the alcoholic content of the blood, you pass through the progressive stages of disintegration we have described. For many people, a safe rule is to stop drinking the instant you are conscious of a seemingly higher tonus and sense of well-being.

Drink mildly if you cannot stop thinking and being tense over the day's work. Pay no attention to the prophets of gloom who state that the slightest alcoholic intoxication is mentally injurious because the brain cells are injured by minimal doses. There is no evidence for such a theory. But avoid taking the chance of drinking during the daytime if you must be up on your toes. Confine your alcohol to evening hours. And obviously avoid the deadly hangover, unless you are willing to pay the price of a stuporous day when your brain functions feebly and you feel, as one old toper puts it, "afraid you'll die one minute, and afraid you won't the next."

In healthy young people, mild drinking releases inhibitions and hence much disintegrated energy. Probably the craving to "do things" is a natural drive in the energy-storing period of life. Every energy discharge serves to develop new nerve tracts; even crude, violent flux does this. Then, too, the accumulation of surplus energy having no suitable outlet, particularly characteristic of adolescence, is unpleasant. The average youth, furthermore, is

driven vastly more by his organs than by his brain. His emotional control is feeble, and his emotional education worse. Hence, when relaxed from inhibitions which he neither understands nor is adjusted to, he tends to scatter brain and energies without regard to consequences. A few superior young people gain quick and healthy let-down from the hyper-tensions of surplus energy seeking outlet through alcohol in moderation. But the average youngster of twenty-five or less stands to lose much more than he gains by a complete alcoholic let-down. Read the death lists from automobile accidents caused by youthful (as well as elderly, be it added) drunken drivers! Talk, if you like, with any neurologist or psychiatrist who specializes in cases of adolescent nervous breakdowns. While obviously the latter do not always derive from the misguided use of alcohol, in many cases the extra primary stimulation whips them into hot flames of emotion. They indulge in petting parties that all but reach the sexual climacteric, are frightened by its dangers, and, after repeated experiments, fall into the hands of the doctors, emotional wrecks and intellectual failures.

What about alcohol as an "escape" for the tense adult? Some experts leave you to infer that people who want to escape something are psychopathic. But why not escape via alcohol—if you do not pay too high a price for the escape? It is all a matter of price. And the price depends

on the individual—on him and on nothing else. Can you get more out of it than it takes from you? Then use it and win. Does it take more from you than you get out of it? Then don't be a fool. Cut it out quickly.

Cigarettes are mild and often harmless relaxatives. Indeed, the colossal increase in cigarette smoking during the past years is a phenomenon of man's efforts to achieve one phase of the vital equilibrium. Tobacco is, of course, a narcotic. The narcosis of nicotine affects the higher centers quickly. The most accurate experiments recently conducted by Sir Humphrey Rolleston, of Cambridge University, show that smoking lowers mental efficiency from 10% to 23%, according to the individual and the character of the tobacco. Similar confirming evidence I have elsewhere reported and discussed.* Most investigators agree essentially with tests I have made on myself and others, which show, among other things, a marked decline in the volume and quality of writing done after heavy smoking. And they support the introspective evidence of scores of smokers, who testify that "one good cigar gives them a pleasant let-down." The let-down is, of course, a mild narcosis.

Now, why should millions of people, the world over, seek this effect? No healthy person wants a let-down except when he is over-driven. And he may be over-driven in his emotional life,

* *The Art of Learning*, pp. 127-132.

in his muscular efforts, in his sensory functions, in his active thinking, or in several or all of these ways combined. This is precisely what is happening to the majority of city-dwellers. They suffer from an array of maladjustments of varying intensity to the rapidly changing economic and social system. Most of those lucky enough to have jobs are earning their bread and butter at labor which is either monotonous or acutely unsuited to their individual tastes and training. They find no other work to do; so they must stick to the uncongenial job or else starve. The best way to get along with an uncongenial job is to "forget it." Indeed, this is the very phrase that is constantly being mouthed by foremen, Sunday School teachers, Success Cult evangelists, and personnel managers in their dealings with dissatisfied workingmen. The advice is good, *provided* you understand its implications.

To "forget it" means to achieve relaxation through becoming less sensitive toward whatever troubles you. And the easiest way of becoming less sensitive is to resort to some narcotic that is strong enough to lower the emotional and mental tone, yet mild enough to leave intact and strong all the activities required for the day's work. By removing the adverse emotional attitude, the gentle nicotine thus improves the worker's net efficiency, if we measure the latter strictly in terms of ability shown in finishing the day's work.

The narcosis induced by the old-style strong cigar and by the very large cigar which is chewed and sucked on for a long time has proved somewhat too violent for most workingmen; muscular activity and coordinations have been reduced thereby, with the natural result that the cigarette and the very mild small cigar have gained favor among the masses. Minute narcotic doses frequently repeated turn out to be better balancers than do heavy doses at long intervals.

How about smokers who are not maladjusted laborers? Well, they show several other distinct patterns, chief among which is our old friend the high-pressure business and professional man, who speeds up his nervous system with strong coffee or other stimulant, in order to achieve the greatest possible amount in the course of a business day. He is not maladjusted to his work; on the contrary, he enjoys it and deliberately seeks more of it, and ever more. But he finds himself racing toward the day's end. He cannot slow down. His mind fixates on something and will not let go when he wants it to. As the saying goes, he takes his business home to bed with him. Result: insomnia, worry, fidgets, and eventually some narcotic.

A few men of this pattern are brought to a state of relative rest by a whiff at a cigarette or two. I know several doctors who regularly smoke immediately before performing delicate

operations requiring the finest coordination of hand and brain. Only thus does the energy of muscles and nerves flow with complete and easy smoothness. Unfortunately, however, many tense workers drift into some drug habit, though the drug may be one of the milder narcotics. It is well known that an appallingly high percentage of successful doctors and surgeons become addicts, partly because they have free access to drugs, but chiefly because they are all grossly overworked and loaded with terrible responsibilities. The lives of their patients haunt them, even in sleep. And the time comes when they have to choose between quick artificial relief and total collapse.

EYE STRAIN

Are you troubled with eye tensions? Then seek a competent oculist. But bear in mind that such tensions are often merely the focussing point of larger tensions. Often, too, they are temporary and relieved by total relaxation.

Progressive oculists recognize the effect of general nervous tensions on the eyes. The late Dr. G. S. Derby * went so far as to say:

“I wish that we could banish the term eyestrain from our vocabulary. If the general

* Ocular Neuroses. An Important Cause of So-called Eye-strain. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1930. Vol. 95, pp. 915-917.

public could learn that eyes are seldom strained, this would be a much happier world to live in. . . . The eye is provided with a large factor of safety and . . . healthy eyes do not become diseased even by excessive use. During the course of the year I see a large number of young men from various professional schools who are carrying heavy programs of work. Frequently the system rebels and the trouble may center in the eyes. In practically all cases they have been burning the candle at both ends, neglecting regular meals, sufficient sleep, fresh air and exercise. To do hard eye work, one must keep the body fit."

Bad posture or faulty illumination may set up eye tensions. To relax while using the eyes, avoid any posture that disturbs blood circulation or sets up muscle tensions. Most people read best sitting with back straight, the head slightly inclined, the book page at one's own best distance, with the light coming from behind and somewhat above the shoulder so that it falls on the page evenly.*

The eyes are extremely susceptible to any upset that lowers nervous energy. Eye and nervous tensions interact, and each tends to exaggerate the other. Worry and fear about one's eyes often bring on a difficulty closely related to the dreaded trouble. Certain ocular neuroses, for example, derive from the sufferer's fear of inherited eye trouble since some member of his

* For a full discussion of important factors in good reading, see *The Art of Rapid Reading*, New York, 1929.

family is either blind or afflicted with extremely poor eyesight. He worries lest he overstrain his eyes, and works himself into a lather of fear that he may injure his eyes permanently and be forced to give up his work.

Occasionally people develop eye trouble as a means of escape from unpleasant situations, like one such case reported by Dr. Derby. A young patient was convinced that he had sensitive and delicate eyes and should be careful in their use. His eyes troubled him greatly during his entire school life, even though examination revealed no serious difficulties. During an entire winter, the patient was given several months' vacation from school because of his eyes. A trouble rooted, however, in the fact that the youth was a slow student. He developed "eye trouble" as a means of escape from work too difficult for him. Finally he managed to get through the painful school years, entered the real estate business, liked it, and now has no eye trouble whatever.

Many eye tensions are easily and promptly relieved by modern methods of exercise. If you feel constant strain in either the eyes themselves or in some related centers, such as the neck or between the shoulder blades, investigate the possibilities of supervised exercise. People often find permanent relief through several months of such work.

Since you read and study best in alter-

nate periods of work and rest, make it a rule to alternate close eye work with intervals of rest in which you use other muscles. Stand up and stretch after every half-hour of close eye work. Walk around. Get fresh air if you can. Think about what you have read, but do not read again for at least five minutes. If you feel tensions in the back or neck, try stiffening one arm and then the other in a horizontal position, holding the arm out straight with one set of muscles while you try to pull it back to the shoulders with the opposing muscles. Do this for five or ten minutes. Many people break tiny but annoying tensions with this simple exercise.

If troubled with eye tensions that do not seem to be accompanied by faulty vision, perhaps you are like many people I know whose eye tensions seem to be brought on by over-smoking. Nicotine narcotizes the nerves and muscles in varying degrees. It affects the large muscles least of all. In many people, it seems seriously to narcotize the small muscles of the eyes, so that they are unable to expand and contract promptly and delicately, especially for close work. As the tiny eye muscles become slightly numbed, the consequences to vision are relatively more serious than is the temporary mild paralysis of the muscles of arm, hand, or leg.

Several such cases have come to my attention. In each, the eye tension victims reported aching between the shoulder muscles, a tired and

sometimes aching neck and part of the back, and mild eye strain. In each case, too, the sufferers smoked heavily. When I suggested that they give up smoking for several days as an experiment, the results were remarkable. Within twenty-four hours, each person reported that the eye, shoulder and back tensions had completely disappeared. And the strains returned only with smoking.

Obviously, any number of other factors may lead to symptoms similar to those of the heavily nicotineized eye muscles. So don't be disappointed if cutting out smoking helps you little if any. But at least the experiment is harmless, and it may end useless strain and tension.

Sometimes what one doctor calls "eye stress" causes insomnia, disturbances of the circulation and gastrointestinal tract. Dr. E. L. Jones, reporting in *International Clinics*, describes eye stress as "the overcoming, by unconscious effort, of an impediment in the focus of the eye, to obtain its best vision." It is not related to neat or fine work. It is commonest in people of perfect or nearly perfect vision, either with or without glasses. The nerves which control the focussing muscles of the eye and those that regulate the heart and organs of the intestinal tract, are closely related. So it is not inconceivable that symptoms of distress and even disease of heart and intestinal tract may derive from eye stress.

FOOT LOOSE AND FREE

An actress tried to kill herself in a New York theatre. When restrained, she wailed to the police: "I had high ideals and couldn't give them up."

Maybe it was high ideals. But it was more probably high heels. They cause more tensions and collapses than high ideals. Dr. John Martin Hiss, orthopedic surgeon, estimates that 80,000,000 Americans, mostly the women, suffer from some form of foot trouble. Their tensions are doubly bad because they begin wearing their miserably tight and ill-formed shoes after the bones of the feet are completely formed. They suffer greater torture than the Chinese women, for, as Hiss points out, "The slow breaking down of the delicately balanced arches of the feet is more painful than the atrophy of muscles through binding the feet of an infant in which the bones have not yet hardened."

You cannot relax if your feet are bound in tight or ill-fitting shoes. One cause of the dullness of the average mixed social gathering is the discomfort of women shod in high heels and narrow toes. The toe of the shoe should allow the toes to move comfortably, while the heel and big toe should lie in a straight line drawn from their inner sides. Pointed toes and high heels make you tense. So does a constant shift

from comfortable work shoes to stylish but painful dress slippers.

Manufacturers are forced to cater to the average woman's stupidity, for these poor creatures esteem style above comfort. The other day a woman of my acquaintance found, for the first time in years, a pair of shoes that combined comfort and good appearance. She had avoided orthopedic shoes which, she protested, made her feet look like submarines. The day following her purchase, she rushed delightedly back to the store to duplicate the new pair. To her chagrin she learned that she would have to have duplicates made to order, since, as the clerk pointed out, "Women want variety. You can't sell them the same thing twice. So we don't reorder this particular style, and the manufacturers aren't making them any more." The female of the species will continue inferior, nervous, and sickly as long as she indulges in this self-abuse.

Were we thoroughly civilized, all of us would either go barefoot summer and winter or at least wear sandals. Whether stockings and socks should be dispensed with, is a cultural problem which I leave to deep thinkers. Enough to say that whatever binds the foot muscles should be abolished. Modern life, with its clean roads and its omnipresent auto and train and boat, which dissuade us from walking as men used to, has little need of the shoe. This instrument served a high purpose in barbarian days,

when roads were stony, the way long, and legs were the poor man's mare. Now it is obsolete save as a silly style cherished by stand-still minds.

Just to prove that I am not a crank on this subject, I shall quote M. C. Goodspeed, safety engineer of the General Electric Company, who has investigated the causes of accidents. The second commonest cause, says he, is a pair of tight shoes. The wearer cannot get his mind off the hurting bones and flesh. He cannot walk naturally. Hence he does not attend to traffic as he walks the streets; nor does he keep his eye on the machine he may be operating in a factory.

A pretty price to pay for such a petty stupidity!

Drift, Whim and Hobby

ESCAPE WITH ABANDON

THE Easy Way of Life requires abandon. Reckless, aimless flight from duty and familiar places! Forget that bad profit and loss sheet your bookkeeper wants to show you! Forget your vile golf score! Forget the auto agent who insists on selling you a new car! Step out from under!

But how? Oh, how?

"You need a change of scene," says your physician.

Perhaps. But maybe you need some other change still more desperately. How about a change of face? Or a change of trousers? Or a change of perfume? Or a change of sport? Or a change of personality?

The change is the thing. We are all like the crying baby who is distracted from its sobs by the rattle shaken before its eyes by the wise Nurse. Sometimes the rattle turns the trick. Sometimes it fails, and Nurse tries the bottle; if the bottle fails, she tries the poodle and makes him bark at baby; and if all fail, she may lose

her temper and paddle baby—which at least changes the tune of the wail.

“Unless ye become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

We must abandon ourselves to the immediate. We must return to infantile innocence, which eludes description. The best I can do about it is to say that it begins with a flight from the old focus of interest. Have we been worrying over the month's bills? Then the first step is *not* to try to do something else; it is rather to *stop doing everything*. The second step is to *drift openmindedly*.

Do you see what this implies? You do not concentrate on anything. You move along either or both of two lines of association and response. One is the inner revery. The other is the outer scene. You make no effort to choose between the two. You allow events to direct you. You change in harmony with whatever change forces itself upon you. If this sounds mystical, I can't help it. It isn't a whit more esoteric than mince pie.

Few people trained in the old American tradition will admit that they ever drift. High aim, steady toil, and stern conscience ever alert still fill our Pilgrim Pantheon; and the smoke from their altar fires dims our vision. To reveal that you occasionally cut loose is as heinous as picking pockets. So I shall probably be barred from the best society when I admit that, for

many years, I have been a champion drifter.

When weary of the afternoon's work, I turn off all switches except those which keep my legs moving. I amble out into Broadway headed for nowhere. I am filled with the zeal to do nothing whatever. Do I turn north or south? Let the wind decide. If it is cold, I turn away from it. If hot, I may walk into it. Sometimes it is the sun that settles the course. In winter I stick by it, in summer I pursue the shadows. Any well bred mosquito would do as much.

One day I stood for half an hour watching a cockroach crawl up a lovely evening gown in a fashionable Fifth Avenue shop window. My interest was not in the cockroach, but rather in the reactions of passersby who paused to find out at what I was staring. Some day I may publish these.

Whenever duty takes me past them, I pause for a few minutes in great churches, drink in the dusky silences and let the light from stained glass windows flood me. Sometimes—but not often—I go to a motion picture theatre and, instead of watching the picture, watch the faces of the assembled citizenry. This often enlightens me. Again I ask taxicab drivers and subway guards unanswerable questions—not absurd ones nor funny, but quite serious.

I have spent hours at a stretch studying the esthetic factors in a new automobile body, in a steamer coming up the bay, in clothes on dis-

play, and in food exhibits of restaurants. But I get more relaxation out of conversing with strangers about their own specialty (if any). To quiz a sailor about plum duff and marlin-spikes; to inquire of a soldier about discipline in his barracks; to probe the heart of a divorce lawyer or a vermin exterminator—such pursuits lead me far out of my own world and set me free.

There is no surer freedom than the chance discovery of infinitely many Other Worlds. It puts your own petty world in its place—and so it puts you there too. Whoever has learned the art of drifting has forever shattered the illusion of his own importance. Thenceforth he can take things easy.

A second way of letting go is to cultivate your own whims. These are never drift. They are the butterflies of your soul, bright little creatures that are born somewhere in you, fly up into the light and dazzle you for a while as they go nowhere but up and down. They do not live long enough to become hobbies, and they are too much a part of you to be drift-stuff. They are like my Blackberry Sunday.

Six or seven times of a summer, I indulge in a Blackberry Sunday. Not the sort which the soda jerkers mix for you. Around six o'clock of a hot July morning, most often the once holy Sabbath, I sneak out of my back door and go up to the old blackberry patch on my hill. A dry wind pipes out of the west. The earth

under the blackberries still glows with yesterday's hang-over of sun. I crawl in among the brambles and relax.

Swift flies dart in and out. Up the stalks of the burdened vines eager ants crawl, hunting for ripe berries. A swallow swoops in and out in its leaping parabolas of curiosity. He wonders what this huge creature is that lurks under the vines and gobbles the choicest berries, which by right belong to ants and birds. He will never guess that the robber is neither fish, flesh nor fowl, but a nameless thing, a conscious cloud aware of neither more nor less than the entire seeable, hearable, feelable, tastable cosmos. The cloud drifts. Time melts. Then the end.

Ex-robber, ex-cloud, ex-whim merge into a commonplace middle-aged citizen of New Jersey who arises, brushes the dust off the seat of his pants, and ambles down to his house. He is well pleased with his whim of dissolving the crystalline consciousness and swimming around in the mere mist of a mind. He knows once more what the sages of the Far East meant by Nirvana.

Another whim recurs on clear, moonless nights. I go up on the same hill, a little beyond the berry bushes, throw myself on my back, eye the stars, and then amuse myself by trying to form definite ideas about the distances between the galaxies. I play this as a game of solitaire for an hour, then doze off. Oh, happy whim! Never

to be gratified, hence never to die! Though I reach my millionth birthday, I shall never come an inch nearer to the formula which makes real to me the span of space.

It seems to me that all of us would be better animals if we had a thousand and one little whims like these. They make variety easy and escape sure at almost any moment. They demand little time and no money. Tramps and wild boys may draw on them at sight, and their drafts will be honored. Each whim is a let-down. Each let-down strengthens you for the next attack upon Leviathan.

The third let-down is the hobby. Concerning it let little here be said; for the missionaries of the New Leisure have been ballyhooing it of late, making whatever I may add sound like ditto marks at the end of a long and noisy parade.

A hobby may be defined as a whim grown up and demanding justice. It insists that you devote as much time, money and energy to it as to any bread-and-butter task. It promises extravagant rewards—and occasionally yields them. It usually opens a door to a longer escape into a remoter country than any whim ever can. And most people seem to require that.

One man's job may become another's hobby, and *vice versa*. It is the attitude you take toward what you do that determines which is one and which the other. The commonest hobby

among men of moderately high achievement seems to be fishing, with golf a close second. Shooting, music, walking, mountain climbing, collecting rare books, gardening, farming, poetry . . . the list has no end, of course. Nor does it need comment. But one important fact must go into your records. Your best hobby is the one that relaxes you best. It depends therefore upon the sort of things which make you tense. Once you know what tenses you, experiment with hobbies. Nobody knows which one will suit you best. It's as intimate and as elusive as falling in love.

MANY CHANGES

I sympathize with those people who occasionally get their names in the newspaper as a result of their having been discovered living under two names in two towns, sometimes even with two families of their own. I am willing to wager a hogshead of bear grease against a tin whistle that most of these escapades serve mainly as Easy Ways of Life. They bring relief through total escape.

The strain of holding fast to a single design of living may tax certain nervous systems beyond endurance. Unable to find peace within one domain, the distracted soul flees to another. He changes his name, his face, his job, his loyalties, his clothes, and everything else that he

can change. Each change forces him to attend to something different; hence it relaxes him.

To be sure, he may have worked himself into a dreadful mess which had no sane solution within the realm of the first personality. Then his flight becomes a moral one as well as a matter of elemental peace. But in principle the change always aims at the same end, peace.

Do you realize how many partial changes of personality people are constantly seeking—and successfully making? When a woman of fifty bedaubs her leathery cheeks with rouge, dyes her straggly hair, and colors her cracked finger nails so that they look like the talons of a buzzard lately sunken in the flanks of a dead mule, you may be sure that she is seeking escape from her years and all that goes with them. They make her tense. They hurt dreadfully, for she has been miseducated into thinking that the world belongs to the young and the giddy.

Poor soul! She is trying to move into another age. She uses the magic smears to leap the calendar. If she does this with infantile innocence, the leap succeeds. She is Sweet Sixteen once more, at ease amid her lovers.

Now turn your gaze toward the pasty-jowled Bookkeeper who sets forth on his annual vacation, a bright new valise packed with sport clothes, a tennis racket, and other accoutrements of joy. He puts aside his office per-

sonality. He dons his seaside personality. He carries his head higher. He struts. He slouches languidly in his porch chair. He tosses away cigarettes half smoked—the sure mark of a well-to-do young idler who does not know what a budget is. He hints vaguely that he is “in the Street”—a happy half-truth. He creates a new system of interests and activities, all of which first relax and then exalt him. The greater his abandon, the surer his fun.

I wonder how many *poseurs*—usually deemed detestable animals—are merely exaggerated refugees from reality, seeking peace? It is not at all improbable that they are more to be pitied than censured. They may find themselves and their environments hateful, full of strain, and best avoided at any price. By pretending to be what they are not, they are forced to live up to their bluff; and this delivers them from the more painful task of living up to things as they are.

Mrs. Harriet Packard, of Kent, Ohio, allows me to report her own ingenious method of relaxing through changing the scene.

“When I first began to write,” she says, “I was doing all the housework. When I would get too tired, I would go to Cleveland (nearby) and spend from one to three days at a good hotel. There I rested on my bed most of the time and thought of nothing. I took this course of relaxation over a period of some six years.

. . . And then came the depression . . . I can no longer go to an expensive hotel in the city, so I go to some smaller quiet town—preferably where I will not have to talk to anyone that I know—and get a modest room in an unpretentious hotel at \$5.00 a week. I choose a hotel with a cafeteria and thus am assured of food and warmth. I do not have to talk to anyone. I pay my bills, and that is that.”

Ernest W. Veigel, Jr., General Manager of the Rochester Business Institute, uses a similar method successfully. “When I am at my wits’ end here, I usually go to New York City and flounder among the high buildings and the masses of people. I have always felt that the size of what New York stands for puts me back to my work resolved to do bigger and better things in a sensible way. When I become physically exhausted I usually like to go to East Aurora to Elbert Hubbard’s Roycroft Inn. There is an atmosphere and a serenity which I have found nowhere else. Two or three days at Roycroft Inn and I am inspired, rested, and thrilled to go back to my work to carry out some of the inspiration I have received while sojourning at Roycroft Inn. These two places have helped me more than anything else I know.”

One reason for my living in a hill country is that I can get a change of scene in a dozen yards north, south, east or west from my study. To the north, I thrust my face into a bracing

breeze that often rises to a gale as it whines over a distant ragged ridge of hills. To the south I gaze down upon a still, green valley across whose thicketed meadows a brook meanders whitely. To the east, I see a far-off village with spires and steep roofs peering above the ancient oaks; and miles beyond the village the blue Ramapos, whose kindly rolling contours soothe the mind with thoughts of peace and quiet. To the west, I see a slow rise of fields at whose further end there is silhouetted great pines, crazy old barns, a two-hundred-year-old Quaker church, behind which the sun sets in its infinite variety of cloud and hue.

But the greatest change of scene is none of these. It is the one which almost everybody outside of the dense town may enjoy at any time between sunset and sunrise. It is the upward glance into the night sky. Alas, how few have learned to make the most of it! How few who know that it is the easiest way to the peace that passeth understanding!

HARMONIZING YOUR INNER AND OUTER RHYTHMS

A sound philosophy of life is well timed. *The individual discovers his inner rhythms and then the periodicities in his environment; after which he evolves a practical plan of using his energies so as to get what he wants with the*

least expenditure of those energies from moment to moment. This may sound strange to you, for doubtless you do not realize that the body has its own rhythms of heart, lungs, and swing of muscle. So let us take a brief excursion into this vastly important realm of physiology.

The inner rhythms of the body are just as real as shooting stars and whooping cough. They can be watched and measured. They leave their marks on paper. They swing the electric needle in the machines which record their beats and rests. What is more remarkable, though, is the part played by nerve impulses in such profound diseases as epilepsy. The rhythm and stressing of these impulses have lately been found by Gibbs, Davis and Garceau, at the Harvard Medical School.

Epilepsy is literally a brain storm. Electrical discharges accumulate. They normally shoot off at the rate of about ten per second. Just before an attack of minor epilepsy, they come very slowly—only once every three seconds; but now they have a strange design. On the recording instruments you see large round waves followed by sharply pointed waves in regular alternation. In both forms of epilepsy, the voltage runs far above normal. Now, voltage is electrical pressure. This is what causes the nerve impulses to spill over and to short-circuit into other tracts, giving the typical epileptic seizure.

A normal person's brain gives off impulses about half as frequently when asleep as when awake. When asleep we are thoroughly relaxed. So we safely infer that somehow slow tempo of energy release in brain centers either causes or facilitates the lax state of muscle fibres. Is it too much to conjecture that, in a healthy brain, all the various activities going on there must combine to determine this tempo? I think it highly probable. This harmonizes with all that we know generally about the higher nervous controls.

Now these inner rhythms do not pulsate undisturbed by the outer world, for the body goes about its business in a world full of shifting rhythms. These latter impinge upon the body rhythms, and the result is a curious fusing which plays a little understood part in both work and relaxation. Let me illustrate.

As you stroll along the street, you hear a hurdy-gurdy grinding out Chopin's Funeral March. Its dragging swing tends to slow down your stride. In spite of yourself, you try to keep step with this measured melancholy. If you happen to be in a hurry to reach a rendezvous, you vaguely resent this brake action on your legs; for the moment, then, you dislike Chopin. The outer rhythm interferes with the stronger inner urge.

Another day, and you come to the close of a hard task at the office. It leaves you weary.

Yet your body is still aquiver with many fast impulses started by the various duties of recent hours. You step over to the window, to close it; and again you hear the same tune from the street. Now it slows down the inner rhythms most pleasantly. You do not wish to work, you seek only rest; and the slow swing of Chopin facilitates it. Slowly but surely the fast pulsations of the work day break down. The slow tempo gains ascendancy. Now you enjoy Chopin.

These two instances reveal a situation much more complex than students of art and esthetics have ever realized. Living from moment to moment carries us through alternating phases of action and rest. Action demands certain rhythms, according to the situation acted upon. Rest requires other rhythms. At the same time, the outer world bombards us with all sorts of rhythms which, in themselves, bear no uniform nor describable relation to our inner rhythms. From outside also come all sorts of non-rhythmic sequences of noises, sights and movements, to many of which we must adjust within our private action-rest cycle.

Now, the technique of relaxation, be it esthetic or otherwise, is deeply involved in both streams of pulsation. What we need at any given moment is doubly determined. Are we fresh and on the point of starting a task? Then we must know the best tempo of the task itself no less than our own best inner tempo of execution. Are

we weary toward the close of hard work and ready to relax? Then we must adjust to inner and outer rhythms again in a certain manner. The exact space-time point at which we have arrived and the exact phase of the inner action-rest cycle are codeterminers of the effectiveness of a given rhythm. If this sounds obscure and difficult, then I have created the right impression upon you; for this whole matter of rhythms in living is enormously mysterious and intricate. Make no mistake about that! The glib philosophizing of critics is childish here.

We cannot declare a certain rhythm of music good for relaxation. All depends upon who is relaxing and from what sort of work he is relaxing. How old is the seeker of ease? Which sets of muscles has he been using hardest? What is his pulse rate? How fast does he breathe? Will he be lying down, sitting or standing up when the music begins? What is his emotional state at the moment? Answer these and a dozen more hard questions, and you will come close to prescribing well.

Rhythms as slow as thirty beats per minute are very hard to enjoy. Heart, lungs and muscles cannot slow down to meet such. Yet in some individuals at some moments it becomes possible. On the other hand, rhythms faster than 120 beats per minute cannot be enjoyed unless we play a trick on them with our inner rhythms by massing the beats around a few

stressed points and thus inventing a slower rhythm with more members to each unit.

The faster the inner rhythm at a given moment, the harder it is to enjoy a much slower outer rhythm until inner fatigue sets in. As rhythm speed is connected closely with basal metabolism, children and exceptionally vigorous adults get little relaxation out of very slow outer rhythms except when weary.

When the rhythm of work is medium, even, and monotonous, relaxation comes most easily from some rude, harsh, noisy pulsation from outside. This breaks down the inner set in a twinkling. Jazz works thus on the tired business man, the dullness of whose routine exertions demands shock.

RELAXING THROUGH MUSIC

We may enjoy music in three ways: by playing it ourselves, by listening to somebody else play in our presence, and by listening at a distance over the radio. Of these the last is by all odds the best means of complete relaxation. If you doubt it, I shall argue thus.

Few of us play well enough to attain thorough relaxation at the task. Something of the labor lingers, to spoil the hour just a little. But even for those who have mastered their instruments, playing does not dovetail into the irregularities of our daily routine. We must go

to the piano; it cannot be lugged to us when the mood comes over us. The violin goes sour when the day is too dry or too wet, while the strings misbehave on the faintest provocation. In short, the work of preparing for playing only too often blurs the overtone of pleasure.

As for listening to a player in a public hall, this is the poorest of all relaxations through music. For many concert-goers are ill-bred swine, arriving late, rustling programs, whispering, giggling, and reeking of cheap perfumes. They clap their hands at the close of each rendition, thus wrecking the tonal effects for the few decent folk who come to enjoy music. Then, too, the performers writhe and puff and screw themselves up into agonies of finger, lip, and cheek, not any of which is pleasant to contemplate. And at the same time you, the wretched listener, must sit stone-still in an ill-designed seat, resisting every temptation to make yourself comfortable. What could hamper serene enjoyment more?

To rid yourself of all tensions, save those needed for whatever you wish to be doing, you must do two things: first, remove as many interfering stimuli as possible; and secondly, put yourself into the most relaxing position so that no muscle tightens except those which you must use in attending to the desired matter of the moment.

Now, let's apply this to the enjoyment

of music. When you tune in on the radio, everything favors complete relaxation, hence complete pleasure. First of all, you pick up what you most like. Then you adjust the controls so as to give forth tones at whichever loudness appeals to your ear. Then you put yourself in whatever position you like—you may sprawl on your bed, or walk up and down the room, or even go to sleep to the music, as not a few do.

As you listen, no miserable late-comers rustle in and make you curse them and their breed. No antics in the orchestra! No smells around you—unless you yourself elect them. No interruptions of applause by the mannerless! Or, if they start, a light twist of a knob, and they go wandering off through the absorbent ether, unheard.

Here we have "pure music"—not in the sense that Bach is pure, but in a better sense. Here we escape "program music"—again in a new sense of the old phrase. Music unobscured by the clutter of its causes. Music stripped of circumstance but not of pomp. Music as great composers dream it before it reaches a written page.

Many people have told me that they never knew what utter relaxation was until they caught onto the trick of turning off the lights, tuning in on fine radio music, and then flinging themselves in an abandon of rest upon the bed. If you have never tried this, do so soon.

Every normal reader should ponder well Moissaye Boguslawski's illuminating experiments in the Chicago Hospital for the Insane, and Willem van de Wall's more extensive tests in the institutions of New York State and Pennsylvania. Music works strange miracles upon the shattered mind. A man whose memory had gone blank recalled almost everything clearly, after listening to beautiful melodies. Another man who was always fighting his keepers became serene. Many a patient deep in dark introspection rises out of it into the sunlight of sanity as he listens to Beethoven and Mozart. Inmates who are persuaded to join in singing the old, simple songs lose their eccentricities and their fury for the nonce. Some singers remain close to sanity for hours or even days after such participation.

Normal men and women benefit even more than do these poor broken creatures. To this a cloud of witnesses can testify; and always the burden of their evidence is the same—something tense breaks within the listener, as the music flows on; some strange release from strain is brought by the magic of a few sounds arranged in a certain order. Just how this happens is hard to describe to a reader not versed in psychology—and it is not all easy sailing for the psychologist himself. So I am omitting the explanation and accepting the obvious fact here.

Churches have turned to music as their

best help. And many a congregation has, in the course of years, drifted steadily away from the earlier ritual toward an almost continuous performance of organist, choir, and soloist. Music has indeed virtually displaced theology and preaching in many quarters.

Now turn to the appreciation of a fine painting. The same rule holds. Eliminate all irrelevant tensions, and you greatly enrich the esthetic moment. Every experienced critic and art dealer knows this—and, as far as possible, practises it. Of all institutions designed for man's delight, the most stupidly planned is the ordinary art gallery. It consists of many huge rooms on whose walls paintings are crowded against one another so that, to a sweeping eye, they present an indescribable blotch of hostile hues and irrational magnitudes. Why should such an arrangement be so abominable? For only one reason—our same old one! Each canvas tends to pull your eyes to itself. Each pull sets up tensions, some in the eyeball itself, others in your neck, which must be variously turned and twisted to contemplate the picture. To this misery add the final touch: each picture must be viewed from its own special distance and in its own best illumination, all of which necessitates your fiddling back and forth until you have found the spot. This sets up tensions in leg and back. Result: extreme weariness after half an hour or so in the gallery.

A marathon race is scarcely more exhausting than an hour in such a chamber of horrors. I have, more than once, come away from the Metropolitan Museum in a state of collapse and rage. Then I recall the intelligent Amsterdam curator who has put Rembrandt's "Night Watch" in a room by itself, darkened the place to a soft dusk, admitted a little diffused light which is in tone with the strange browns and yellows of that masterpiece, and—thank heaven!—placed comfortable seats at the right spots so that you can relax as you observe. No antagonistic canvas clamors for your attention. You do not tighten the muscles of neck, leg, or back as you reposedly contemplate the picture. Thus you take in its beauty precisely as you take in music over the radio in a darkened room.

RESTFUL CONTACTS

Every moment brings some fresh contact between your inner and outer worlds. You see a boat bobbing off shore. You hear gulls scream. You feel the cool slime of seaweed on the strand. Out of these primary contacts, you build up feelings, attitudes, perspectives, and finally something permanent in your philosophy of life.

You may be keen to smells, while I am dull. You may elevate odors to high importance in your philosophy, while I scale them down.

Individual differences in philosophy begin on these sensory levels and are projected upward throughout all the higher psychic levels. Hence we must be on our guard when we plan an Easy Way of Life for a particular person. Let us approach our planning then through the broader and commoner interests of mankind. Let us ask which contacts seem to ease many people and to shatter tensions in many.

In the domain of sense, we note first the things of beauty.

"It lifts me out of myself." So runs the frequent comment on some lovely thing. A deep truth well phrased! Analyze it and you find that we yield to the thing easily, forget our own desires for the moment, become submissive, and thus gain rest. The inner drives die away for a while. The outer object leads our sense organs and all of our reveries. The tensions set up by our own cravings are thus dissolved. You let go. You allow the thing to work its will on you.

Burton, author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, when dejected, used to wander down to the Thames wharves and listen to the cursing and yelling of the profane bargemen. Richard Jeffries would find escape from his depressions and worries by seeking the lovely things in the National Gallery and the British Museum. "Somehow," he writes, "I came in from crowded streets and ceaseless hum; one glance at these shapes, and I became myself."

John Ruskin was often enraged by the stupidities of the British public; then would he go look at penguins. A contemplation of these creatures always restored his balance. "One feels everything in the world sympathetically ridiculous," he wrote to Charles Eliot Norton, "one can't be angry when one looks at penguins."

I suspect that all these are elemental escapes. I have found them all useful at times. Best is the cool silence of a gallery containing at least one masterpiece. When I go to Washington and work myself into a fury over the slow mechanics of its stupendous and stupefying bureaucracy, I wander over to the Freer Collection, hard by the Department of Agriculture; and there I linger long before unspeakably beautiful Chinese vases. Two in particular erase all irritation. To try to put into words their magic spell would be to play the fool. Language lacks symbols for such ineffable forms. To me those vases come close to being Plato's "ideas." If you don't know what that means, never mind!

We can find no pleasure in submitting to a thing of beauty unless our first glimpse of it holds some promise of pulling us out of our tensions of the moment. The faintest suspicion, fear or repugnance blocks us. Take such a simple experience as that of going out for a stroll in the country, reaching a hill from whose breeze-tossed top we look out upon broad valleys and the far blue of mountains. Just a little

weary, we would like to drop down upon the sward and drink in the loveliness. But as we cast about for the pleasant spot, we spy a tiny snake in the grass. This starts a faint reverberation of childish fears. Quite enough to break the spell! We resist sitting down. We think, worry, and then move along ruefully. Though we assure ourselves that the reptile was harmless, we cannot quite bring our bodies back to the spot and relax.

In a sense half poetic, we must say to each thing of beauty: "Thy will be done!" We must give up resistance and, as Schopenhauer puts it, "continue to exist as the pure subject, the clear mirror of the object." By blocking every impulse to do something, we give the right of way to the thing. It leads; we joyously follow.

Now perhaps you see how beautiful things have steadily intruded upon the ancient domain of religion; how music has flooded the churches; how stained glass windows and magnificent spires have been devised and paid for by the pious; and how, in our day, finally many a churchman turns his entire Sabbath service into an esthetic ritual wrung dry of all theology. May it not even turn out that the "Day of Rest" was first conceived and set up as a holy institution by simple souls who saw more clearly than the later sophisticates? May they not have understood that rest is one half of nature, bringing in its train the richest of pleasures?

The enjoyment of loveliness cannot be identified with religious experience, as a few daring speculators have suggested. Always at least one tremendous difference remains: enjoyment is mere enjoyment, the pure flux of feeling, fringed with reveries, while religious experience involves convictions, hopes, a faith of something, however vague, and hence a rationalizing process. I revel in music thoughtlessly. The less I think, the more pleasure I get from the melodies. The immediate experience is enough. But no sequence of perceptions, unsupported by thinking, can have the intellectual content of religious experience.

In a moment of pure esthetic contemplation, we lose all sense of ourselves. We drink in the scene until we go drowned in it. But in a religious moment we must think of ourselves as related to the world and its supposed values. We must conclude that we are "saved," or "at one with the universe," or "children of God," or "purged of our sins." The personal intrudes upon the flux of sense. We place ourselves in the cosmos. And this goes far beyond an esthetic attitude.

In one respect, at least, art and play are alike. Both are an escape from serious, practical, burdensome affairs. Both lead us from the realm of things that matter into the happy kingdom of inconsequence. People who take their sports and games seriously defeat the purpose

of the whole enterprise and cheat themselves. So, too, do those other benighted people who take art seriously. How much fun they miss! The over-trained business man whose habits of winning out in competition have dominated him is the one who usually plays golf and tennis as if he were organizing a company to compete with Henry Ford. And it is the over-trained intellectual who insists upon thinking that paintings and sunsets and pretty clothes must have deep meanings and profound consequences. Neither business man nor intellectual is in a healthy state of mind or body.

To think of next to nothing, go regularly to the motion pictures, as I do. Believe me when I say that these hygienic projections have added years to my life and endless laxity to my muscle fibres. The pictures have enabled me to give up light wines and beers. They have delivered me from the snare of the popular novel. They have saved me hundreds of dollars and thousands of hours in the acquisition of tranquillity. And I am only one of hundreds of millions.

A few moth-eaten dramatic critics and scholars of the old régime still tell us that the pictures can never rival the stage in realism, because the living actor is so much more convincing and appealing than the shadow image on the screen. But the simple rustics of remotest Arkansas understand that shadow images are infinitely more appealing than actors and actresses

rigged up, powdered, painted, and talking their stilted phrases beyond footlights. Men want the illusions of reality fused with the substantial truths of dream life. This the pictures give as no other thing can. Space and time are manipulated to produce unimaginable perspectives and transformations. But, best of all, story and presentation usually relieve the spectator of all mental effort. For this we have to thank, not the medium as such, but the producers and their devotion to mass production.

Toward the close of a fatiguing day, many a man drifts into the nearest motion picture theatre, heedless of the feature play on display. The star and the company make little difference to him. For, here as in so many other esthetic and artistic responses, it is not the object that counts, but the act itself. Merely sitting in the peaceful darkness and looking listlessly at the screen induces repose.

WHEN THE SPELL BREAKS

All spells break. There is no everlasting magic. For the spell depends upon the spell-bound no less than upon the magician. What shatters it? Here are the commonest destroyers.

Simple fatigue outranks all others. Eye, ear, memory, and mood all have their limits of

endurance. For life is ever shifting from one action to rest, then to another action and rest. The man has never lived who could go on doing any single thing for even ten hours without the briefest interruption. Have you ever tested your own endurance in listening to your favorite music or in studying your favorite canvases in an art gallery? Try it. It is enlightening.

Next ranks casual association. Often this crops up at the very first onstep of fatigue and masks the latter. On other occasions it arises either from some petty feature in the thing of beauty or else from some fringe experience, such as the whispering of fools behind you at the concert, or the rustling of programs, or the faint sound of a passing automobile. If this distractive item bobs up during a lull in our esthetic appreciation, it plays havoc.

Failure of the thing of beauty to sustain its first promise is disastrous. A story may start off well, hold us in its grip up to the fourth chapter, then crumble and fall. We grow bored, annoyed, and finally downright disgusted. It fails to lead us. So we take the reins in our own hands and go our own way.

Finally, the reverse may arise. The thing of beauty may surpass our powers of appreciation, just as the beauty of geometry is beyond ordinary poets and fiction writers, though well within the range of architects and engineers. I

cannot sit through Parsifal, for my span of attention to music is too short. I cannot read *Anthony Adverse*, try as I will; for my interest in adventure is too flickering. But I could read through an epic of America in fifty thousand lines of dactylic hexameter without the slightest strain, though all my contemporaries might fall by the wayside as I plodded on through it. Each person has his own span of esthetic perceptions, and this span varies according to fluctuations in his own action-rest cycle. In like manner each of us has his own limits of perceiving and enjoying complex things. The spell breaks as a certain level of organization within the thing of beauty is reached. From Ionic to Arabesque, from Jew's harp to orchestra, from parable to three-decker novel of a hundred characters, the gradations of enjoyment run finely. At each stage somebody reaches his limit and steps out of the magic circle.

Now, the first rule of easy living within the realm of loveliness is to stop attending as soon as the spell breaks. When the opera bores you and you begin to eye the coiffure of the dowager in the nearest box, leave the place as if it were a pestilence. If you don't you will slowly build up an aversion to opera music, exactly as little girls forced to practise at the piano come to despise the instrument.

Few spells last more than a few minutes. Do not expect more of them.

Let's Simplify!

SPACE-TIME COMMANDS YOU TO SIMPLIFY

SIMPLIFY! Simplify! Simplify! But be not simple!

This is the supreme rule of technique in the artistry of living. There are more things to do than anybody can do; more to be seen, heard, tasted and felt than any mortal sense organs can encompass. The world is so full of a number of things that we'd all go mad trying to deal with the mass. So it becomes a matter of life and death to refuse, to cast out, and to forget most of them.

What shall you discard? To what shall you cling? Whom shall you drop from your list of friends? Whom shall you retain forever? What shall you play? What study?

Only you can decide. And you will decide wisely only if you analyze each possible pre-occupation with an eye to gauging its fitness for you. Plainly you must experiment a great deal, for you cannot appraise the best and the worst things except by tasting and trying. Not that you must eat rat poison, to be sure that it will find no place in your dietary! Not that you must

go out and kill a man in order to make up your mind whether you ought to become a thug. Common sense will usually set the limits of experiment fairly well. When it fails, consult an expert.

As between a man who has nothing to do and one who has too much, I prefer to be the former. The underworked, under-active man will at least have the greater peace of mind and will live longer. The overdriven fellow up at all hours and flitting from one pleasure or duty to another incessantly drains his energies daily and dies young—or at least younger than he need die.

Three things favor the developing of one or two dominant trends and the subordinating of all others. They are the joy of excelling, the joy of absorption, and the sheer physical difficulty of pursuing many interests with equal strenuousness.

It is normal to wish to do things well. The man who takes up golf wants to play admirably. He would like to win all the cups in sight. He who begins chess as a diversion soon craves to beat his teacher. There is, for ninety-nine out of every hundred men, much more pleasure in practising a hobby or a sport surpassingly well than in merely practising it without excellence. And each attraction of this sort is a challenge to the performer's abilities. That

is one thing that makes it an attraction in the first place.

Now, to do anything well calls for much planning and practise. To make a successful trip to Scotland, you cannot simply turn yourself over to a travel bureau, soul and body. You must do something on your own; otherwise you will come back disappointed. It is the person who does everything for himself and finds his own way and manner of seeing the unusual sights and meeting unusual people who gets the most fun out of a trip. Only the very stupid and the timid hire touring agencies to do their travelling for them outright. The most that an intelligent person asks of such agencies is to make advance reservations for them at critical points during crowded seasons. As for sports and games, they may be pursued merely as a form of exercise—and then they are likely to pall soon. Or they may be taken more or less seriously, and a genuine effort made to master them—in which case they begin to absorb much time and attention, to the exclusion of other attractions. And this absorption itself is a pleasure. For it is normally agreeable to put all of one's mind and enthusiasm on a single thing.

By the same token it is normally unpleasant to drive hard at several major interests. Few people are blessed with the tremendous physical energy and the mental

elasticity that such a career demands. Try to be a good golf player, a good chess player, a good mountain climber, a good billiardist, and a good bridge player all at once! One man in a hundred thousand may succeed at it. Not two! And here we come upon the deepest of the three factors. *To do anything requires energy. Even eating and drinking use up much energy after the first act of swallowing. Walking through an art gallery is as hard as working in a rolling mill. Try too many pleasures in the course of a day, and soon all the fun goes out of life.*

Most of us begin simplifying ourselves after we pass twenty. Tennis is abandoned, but we may cling to golf. Hiking loses its adolescent appeal, but hand ball endures a while longer. We taper off on our reading of trashy fiction in order to give more time to our deeper interest in home town politics. And so on. A day has just so many moments of possible pleasure and toil. To this pattern we fit our design of living.

But rarely do we fit it as well as we might. We miss the Easy Way of Life largely as a result of pursuing perhaps just one thing too many, or misunderstanding some one of our interests, or missing the economical trick of reaching certain ends. We are at best half-competent artists. Let us admit it and refrain from cursing out the cosmos.

Whenever you can snatch even a moment for it, relax! Relax, even though the mo-

ment is only two seconds long. Relax between soup and fish. Relax between fish and roast. Relax while the old bore beside you tells the story of the two Irishmen. Relax while riding in a taxicab.

One frequent mark of a man of high achievement is this skill. Lloyd George always falls asleep the instant he steps into an automobile (which he is not driving). In the course of a strenuous day, President Roosevelt "lets go" oftener than any previous American statesman. He runs his tense retinue ragged. Thus with many another leader; he seems always calm, unhurried, restful—and truly is, yet strikes hot and hard with perfect timing and aim.

Start practising this go-stop-go-stop-go-stop trick today. Hard at first, it becomes easier in short order. You may revolutionize your career with it.

THE EASY WAY OF WORK

Restful work? Absurd! Listen to the wise men of ages past, and you will find that work is a curse. It wears men out and sends women to early graves. It is a burden and an everlasting sorrow. The race schemes to be rid of it. Men dream of a golden age when they will all lie down beside cool waters and rest forever and forever. For rest is escape from work, just as surely as work is a denial of rest.

This old wisdom contains one truth but it misses another of recent discovery. Today we begin to see that work and rest are not opposed quite so crassly as men once thought. We see that, while we shall never be rid of all work, we may slough off its drudgery and its overstrain. The new art of work is as amazing as the new art of dodging work.

He works best who uses the least energy and yet accomplishes what he sets out to do. He works best who works laxly. He works best who works at what he likes. He works best who is the master of his job and not its slave. He works best who works with the least thought while working. These are the fresh insights of our day. Let us look into them. They are the foundation of the Easy Way of Life.

Many people grow tense simply because they have never found their own peak and pace. Peak is the highest speed a man can attain in a short spurt. Pace is the speed at which he naturally and easily works for long stretches. It will surprise you to observe the enormous differences among people here.

Some of us can hold our pace for a long time but fail miserably if driven much above it. Some Harvard experiments show that, if you increase your speed in running by 1%, you reduce by 9% the period of running. So too in mental work, only with still more striking re-

sults. Try adding a column of figures at your best easy pace. Keep time on the job. Then try adding another column as fast as possible. Observe the errors and the strain.

Study each activity, be it in work or in play. Find the Easy Way. Find what spurts are possible and harmless. Then arrange all of your plans to conform, as closely as possible, to your pattern. Avoid, above all, high pressure performance that is not absolutely necessary. It tenses you, exhausts you, and in the long run lowers your efficiency as well as your comfort.

It may help you here if I call to your attention the vast differences between various fields of activity. You will find a much fuller discussion of the matter in my earlier book, *More Power to You!*

Measure the work done in terms of the calories used up every hour for each pound of body weight. The easiest labor is like hand sewing; it requires a little less energy than dressing and undressing, for the sewer sits quietly at work, using little more than hands and eyes.

The singer uses 10% more energy than the seamstress. The tailor uses 10% more than the singer. The typist about 5% more than the tailor, if she works briskly. The servant who sweeps the floor uses 10% more than the typist. The book binder 10% more than the servant with broom. The shoemaker about 5% more

than the book binder. And so on up to very fast walking, which uses up six times as much energy as the seamstress.

In the long pull, dealing with people uses up more energy than dealing with inanimate things; and dealing with the latter uses up vastly more than dealing with ideas. Thus, managing a family, teaching school, running a gang of laborers, or caring for sick patients will exhaust a body faster and more profoundly than doing any of the things I have just been mentioning. On the other hand, adding columns of figures, thinking out a problem in mathematics, or studying any abstruse matter not requiring the manipulating of objects or people taxes us lightly. As has been demonstrated, the energy in half of a peanut will keep the brain running for half an hour on a simple problem of arithmetic.

Watch well the relation between your natural energy flow and whatever you happen to be doing. A slight maladjustment may tense you badly. The cure consists in abandoning the work forthwith.

RESTFUL RHYTHMS

Outside my window in a hot summer street three youths are swinging picks and shovels. Their arms and backs move in long, easy strokes, rhythmically—up, over, down—up, over, down—for several minutes at a stretch.

After three or four minutes of heavy exertion, they stop and rest, leaning on the pick handles, bent over slightly, with most of their weight on one foot. Utterly relaxed, they loaf for another minute or two, and then swing back into action. They make amazing progress. Already they have chopped away a foot or two of the underpass they are digging. No waste motion. Utter relaxation.

The boys do not know it, but they have hit upon the best technique for work and play.

The most brilliant performers in every field are those who do their hardest work in a limp state. Did you ever see big Bill Tilden play tennis? Did you ever watch Londos wrestle? Did you ever follow the movements of a champion billiard player or ping pong artist or dancer or typist or almost any other top notcher whose skill is visible? Then you must know that such people are always relaxed and taking it easy while moving, and always at rest between every two moves.

Great pianists like Gabrilovitch, Hofmann, Bauer, Mason, and Hutcheson insist that relaxation is the one factor above all that is a prerequisite to the acquiring of a good piano technique. Again and again, Alex Morrison, one of the world's most successful golf teachers and players, repeats this admonition to learners ". . . Golf is not a game of strength but of accuracy, and accuracy comes only from muscu-

lar relaxation, muscular freedom. Tension is fatal to good golf and lies at the root of every error."

Thus with every activity, from baseball to organ playing, from typing to tennis, from bookkeeping to sales conferences. The most successful performers are the most relaxed. Why?

Because they use their energies in straight-line action. After each moment of rest, they return directly to the task in hand. And they can return simply because they are not pulled away from it by a tense muscle, which acts like an anchor chain.

As few people come into contact with men of high achievement, a false notion of working methods arises. The ordinary observer surveys the gross output of the exceptional and innocently measures it with his own yardstick. He finds that he must toil an hour to write a fairly good report two pages long; hence, he reasons, the gifted writer must put in at least two hours on the same task, inasmuch as two pages in one of his books are so much better. The ordinary man also notices that the gifted writer finished a particular book in six months, while travelling around the world. A rude calculation of wordage shows that the author must have thumped his typewriter fully ten hours a day, scarcely pausing for breath or breakfast.

Again he considers the commercial genius who has built up a chain of department

stores in the span of ten years. By similar computations he concludes that this merchant must be King of the Ants, relentlessly toiling as he commands his minions. Likewise with all other outstanding performers, from acrobats down to promoters. They know not ease. It is their destiny to burn fiercely down to the last cinder.

How few intimate studies disclose such a fever! Most men who have gone far and high turn out to be rather easy-going fellows. They seem never to exert themselves. They sleep long and deeply. They potter around during working hours. They play like children. Indeed a ruthless exposure of their private lives would contain many a scene like that reported by the Princeton undergraduate who recently took notes on Albert Einstein. Among other scandalous episodes, this young Boswell records that the eminent mathematician was seen loitering at the curb on Princeton's main street, sucking an ice cream cone, while he watched a man unload ducks from a truck.

In a way undreamed of by the common man, sucking ice cream cones and watching ducks contribute to skill in mathematics. How a man works depends upon how he relaxes. A genius in some accomplishment is also a genius of rest. His technique of execution is hardly more important than his technique of loafing. For, as physiologists will soon be showing you in these pages, the complete behavior pattern is not, as

the behavioristic psychologists seem to say, merely a system of acts; it is made up of acts and rests, startings and stoppings, lunges and lethargies, all of which must alternate.

A "good" pattern is not necessarily one in which there are many instants of activities and few of rest. It is not one whose activities are evenly spread over the total time of performance. The relation between the two phases depends upon the precise task at hand, the larger situation within which this task falls, and the previous activities of the worker.

A football game lasts one hour, not counting time out between quarters. An ingenious observer with a stop watch has pointed out that the players seldom are in action for longer than eleven minutes of the hour. They are either lined up awaiting signals, or else standing around waiting for the completion of a play, or else piled up in a heap.

If this calculation is accurate—and it well may be—there are five minutes of relative rest for each minute of peak performance. The game may therefore serve us well as a model of all intelligent behavior, at least in this one respect. Intense work for one minute, followed by five minutes of rest, is one of the surest ways to high achievement in many fields. And some similar alternation will be found best for almost every other important variety of striving.

- The greater one's exertions and expendi-

ture of energy, the more frequent and the more complete must be the ensuing relaxation. If you are a professional sprinter in the hundred-yard dash, you release every ounce of energy in spurts of eleven seconds or less, after which you must take it easy for several hours—unless you are an athlete in ten thousand. If you are engaged in managing many people, you burn up your fuel fast and must pause often to stoke up again. On the other hand, if you have the good fortune to be a professor of mathematics in a small college where only four or five students show up to take your courses every fall, you may get along admirably with many brief moments of ease.

REST IN THE MIDST OF WORK

No form of work is best done without rest periods. Few forms are best done with rest at intervals greater than one hour. The most arduous labor calls for a brief pause every fifteen minutes or so. Work which taxes the mind demands its own peculiar alternations. No flat rule may be laid down here.

A few enlightened factory men have mastered the secret of rest in work. They require their employees to knock off once or twice every hour and do something totally different from their assigned tasks. This increases the output and reduces the effort. In the spinning

partment of a great Pennsylvania textile mill, workers came and went so fast that the directors took the matter under special consideration. In other departments the labor turnover was only five per cent—phenomenally low; but in this one it rose to two hundred and fifty per cent. That is, two and one-half workers filled each job there in the course of a year. Working conditions seemed to be about the same as in the rest of the plant. But workers complained of neuritis, foot trouble, melancholia, and much day dreaming. So it was decided to see what simple rest periods might do.

Once every two hours everybody was compelled to knock off and, lying down flat, to relax thoroughly for ten full minutes. Within a day or two the scene was transformed. All melancholia and day dreaming ceased. Men stuck to their jobs cheerfully. Production rose. For the first time the workers began to earn bonuses. At the end of the first year of systematic relaxation, there had been no labor turnover! Every man had stuck to his post! Practices similar to this should become universal.

For years I have urged executives to equip their offices with commodious bookshelves—and volumes to match. Read anything that interests you for fifteen-minute intervals throughout the day. During that time, refuse to allow anyone to disturb you. Put your feet on the desk, light your cigar, and take it easy alone.

Here is a keen educator who stops work every half hour to listen to a light melody on his phonograph or from his radio. He has found that his day is most fruitful when he relaxes thus.

Here is a distinguished historian who often turns from dusty tomes and writes doggerel, some of which finds its way into the cheap magazines.

An investment banker writes humorous verse about his favorite hobby—fishing—which he joyfully contributes for nothing to sundry special periodicals.

A busy editor often sneaks off to the movies for an hour or so at noon, especially if he has had an unusually heavy morning. He drops in at the most convenient show, and the more inane the picture, the more completely it relaxes him.

FIND WORK THAT FITS YOUR INNER RHYTHMS

In an era of unemployment, you may sneer at me for advising you to cast about for a career which harmonizes with your inner rhythms. Nevertheless I insist on the advice. Better a lower wage with an easy life than a higher wage and the misery of tense muscles!

Each job has its own natural tempo, within certain limits. The job that is merely one

in a series has its rhythm fixed much more rigorously than the job which is a one-man-affair. The automobile factory job, for example, is paced to the fraction of a second; the worker must complete his operation as precisely as the assembly line moves on its inexorable way. If he cannot, he is discharged. If, on the other hand, he moves much faster than the assembly line requires, he has many delicious moments of rest between spurts of activity. But too many of these little escapes can bore him and make him seek a job of faster tempo.

In modern business the speed of performance has been over-nicely calculated. The worker must conform to the calculation. The job determines the worker. Never does the worker determine the job. Hence you must give heed early to the ease with which you keep step with the job. Must you use your eyes? Then do you feel eye strain, or do you make too many mistakes in vision? Must you use your fingers? Then do they tire early in the day, or go stiff? Do you bungle the things you handle in the afternoon and end the day weary? Must you talk on the job? Then does your speech hold clear and easy all day, or does your throat tighten up and hurt?

Possibly you are faster than your job requires. If only a little faster, you are lucky. But if much faster, you may grow irritable or bored; and then it is time to seek a faster career. For

the hare cannot be harnessed to the tortoise. Luckily there are opportunities for both hares and tortoises. The newspaper reporter often must move fast, with mind no less than with body. He must leap from dog fight to court trial, thence to a robbery and so on throughout the day, ending up with a strawberry festival where he interviews the mayor on the pending sewer contract. At the other extreme of tempo you have the laboratory scientist who sets his pace to match the chemism in his test tube; he may seem to do nothing for days at a stretch, then something gets under way languidly. Between reporter and scientist, find your own best job tempo. As there are thousands of jobs, with as many tempos, we cannot survey them here.

If you wish to go into this matter more thoroughly, read the chapter called "Rules of the Power Plant" in my book, *More Power to You!* Especially the closing pages on work cycles.

Half the world works better when in the presence of other people. The other half works better alone. Some jobs must be performed along with other workers. Some are equally well done in groups or by solitaires. And some can be done only alone.

Find out as early in life as possible which type of job suits you better. Perhaps you would fail miserably if you had to put in eight hours a day in a big, open room full of desks and buzz-

ing telephones and scurrying messenger boys and chattering clerks. If so, keep away from such places. Perhaps, on the contrary, you would mess things badly if you were put into a quiet little office of your own, with no special orders and no supervisor at your elbow watching your performance.

Apparently the sociable worker finds relaxation from moment to moment in the many trifling sights and sounds around him, while the solitary must relax through inner adjustments only. Sometimes the mere presence of other people over-excites the solitary, and that spoils performance in the long run. Sometimes the sociable person turns out to be lacking in inner resources and unable to guide himself throughout the day's work. Again he needs encouragement and comment to keep him running at the right speed. Plainly we have to do with two very different human machines. You must find out which sort you are, if you wish to attain the Easy Way of Life while on the job.

HOW TO GET RID OF CALLERS AND CONFERENCES

If you are run ragged by callers or by interminable useless conferences called by some idiot vice-president or fourth assistant auditor, use all your wits to end the nuisance. Take a tip from an official of a large automobile company

who devised a system to abolish system! While still new at his important job, he observed that the time of his company's most high-priced executives was constantly taken up by conferences lasting from two to four hours each. Furthermore, nothing seemed to come from them! Everybody sat around in endless argument, but without result. To put an end to such waste, when anybody proposed a conference, the official would send a memo by a fast messenger asking each would-be conferee (a) whether he had any facts on the subject of the proposed conference, and (b) whether he had any opinions. Usually he had neither. In short order, these useless conferences were reduced from twelve or fourteen a week to one or two!

Unwanted callers and long-winded visitors make most of us tense. To eliminate these needless demands on time and energy, experiment with any of a number of ways suggested to me by successful rebels against such intrusion.

The managing director of a large welfare concern has developed the "stand-up interview" with bores and triflers. He meets them standing as they enter his office, and offers neither chair nor cigar. No hard feelings result from the technique, which unfailingly serves its purpose.

Another executive uses the reverse technique. He utilizes time taken up by intruders to relax and smoke a cigarette. "Usually," he says,

just going—is just going—” and keeps repeating mentally the phrase like an incantation until, as he reports, “it works by a sort of telepathy.”

A hard-boiled advertising man refuses to be polite. He always “shakes ’em out.” He makes enemies, and doesn’t care. A doctor succeeds “by being so utterly disagreeable that no one remains any longer than necessary to transact clear, good business; by openly refusing to participate in conversations unrelated to the business in hand; in short, by being a boor!” If none of these methods works for you, hide out. Dodge intruders. Hire a well trained buffer between yourself and all callers. In short, use any method that succeeds in your own case. Refuse to allow people to impose on your time. Your time is your life, and it brooks neither manslaughter nor murder!

ESCAPE THE MONSTER, LANGUAGE!

All my life, I have relaxed with ease when alone. When I am unusually tense, I snap back to normal fastest by going away from the human race for a day or so. If, however, circumstances prevent this simple escape, I may have to pull a few fancy tricks in order to shake off the painful tautness of muscle.

After many imperfect efforts to analyze this, the best conclusion I can reach is that the mere presence of a person in the same building with me sets up an obscure attitude, largely linguistic, no doubt; and this forms a background of tensions largely below the threshold of clear consciousness. My impulse to talk to people is powerful. Inhibiting it puts a strain on me. Possibly this explains the whole business. I'm not sure. The fact, however, is as clear as day. And the remedy is sure.

Is this what some people mean by "going into the silences"? If so, I approve of the technique enthusiastically. It is no more mystical than a flapjack. Many people suffer under this mild curse of language. Their testimony, gathered from letters and conversations, shows them hypersensitive to the stimulus of a talkative individual, a book, or anything else that provokes speech. John Haynes Holmes tells me that he has to escape from all such stimuli every Saturday, in order to keep fresh. A woman

physician says that, two or three times every year, she has to get in her automobile, head anywhere, end up at night in a strange place, speak to nobody except when she must, and read not so much as the headlines of the newspapers.

All this agrees with what has been found out about the enormous power of the larynx and tongue in stimulating and being stimulated by the thought processes. Children, during the first exciting years of language fluency, babble themselves into nervous breakdowns. Starting with a pleasant exchange of ideas and sentiments, they soon lose control of the throat mechanism. It runs wild. They make noises like words, but there is no thought in them. Finally they make noises unlike words, giggles, shrieks, gurgles, whoops, and guffaws. Then they repeat former talk in the manner of an echo. The vicious circle ends with a spanking or collapse or a bromide.

How prevent such upsets? Simply withdraw from the cause. Silent meditation apart from the world serves such laryngeal personalities well. No wonder the churchmen of old recommended this method and set aside cubicles to which the overwrought and the excitable might retire. A cheap method, too! In these hard times, more of us ought to indulge in it.

BUSINESS BEDLAM

I am thumbing through the pages of this manuscript, trying to make up my mind whether pp. 45 to 57 inclusive would go in better at the close of chapter three or in the middle of chapter five.

The telephone jangles.

"The gentleman says it is a personal matter. He won't tell me what he wants," says the ever faithful secretary.

I pause in my labor, pick up the receiver, and listen to these words: "Mr. Pitkin, don't you think, with all the automobiles and joy riders whizzing through our streets, you ought to carry a little accident insurance?"

I hang up and ponder over the upsetting American environment. How uncivilized business men are! Only a vulgar boor would interrupt a stranger during his busy hours to sell insurance. Yet this is one of a thousand established practices among our lower classes.

I am driving my car along the highway, seeking a guide post that will tell me where to turn off to reach a certain village. I slow down before what seems to be a sign giving directions and distances. I read it. "Eighteen miles to Smookeigh's Hot Doggery. Best Sandwiches this side of New Orleans." I drive on. I read a second sign. "Eleven Miles to the Grand Rapids Furniture Emporium."

After four tries I finally discover how to reach my destination. Then I ponder over the impudent and annoying clutter of wayside advertisements which imitate mile posts and direction signs and crossing warnings. Each of these causes hundreds of little tensions every month. Not one victim in a hundred knows what happens to him, for the shock is scarcely felt. But the cumulative effect often involves headaches, indigestion, bad dreams, and maybe worse evils. A thousand tiny blows on the nervous system leave their marks, even when each single blow does not register higher up.

NOISE

Noises are worst of all. America is bedlam.

I hazard the guess that at least *one* of the reasons why cities of over 250,000 inhabitants have the highest rate of admission to mental hospitals is the terrific din through which thousands must carry on night and day.

Recent researchers sum up the effects of noise on human beings as follows:

1. Hearing is likely to be impaired in those exposed to constant loud noises.

2. Noise makes workers less efficient. It lessens attention and makes concentration difficult. It decreases both volume and accuracy of work in many cases.

3. People use extra energy in trying to overcome the effects of noise. This frequently overstrains the nervous system, and leads to neurasthenias and psychasthenias. The victims must frequently recuperate in the country to maintain their efficiency. Professor Donald Laird found that typists working under noisy conditions expended 19% more energy than when they did the same tasks in quiet.

4. Noise interferes seriously with sleep, even though the sleepers adjust to it so that they do not remain wakeful.

5. Constant loud noises seriously interfere with the normal development of babies and young children.

Intense sounds may be literally "blood-curdling." At least, sounds well within the range of hearing produce chemical changes in various substances. So report Drs. Earl W. Flosdorf and Leslie A. Chambers, of the University of Pennsylvania. Audible sounds coagulated an egg as though soft boiled! They converted ethyl acetate to acetic acid. Heaven knows what they do to you!

LET'S GO INTO THE SILENCES!

The first campaign to create a restful environment must be aimed against noise and its makers. It has begun, thank heaven! But let us not relent in it until our largest cities become as

still as the streets of Venice. To accomplish this, we need not dig canals everywhere—though that would help. Scientists and engineers know cheaper tricks. Silencers for office and house windows, super-silencers for auto exhausts, non-squeaking auto breaks, rubber shock absorbers in a hundred and one spots, and the sternest control over auto horns, boat whistles, and other atrocities.

The improved health and efficiency of city dwellers would pay ten times over for all such devices in a single year. Why doesn't a desperate Administration, seeking useful work for the unemployed, mop up this job at once?

Easing the Emotions

RESTFUL FEELINGS, ATTITUDES, AND EMOTIONS

EMOTIONS, attitudes, and feelings are explosives. When touched off, some part of your personality "explodes." The explosion may be violent and marked to any observer, as when you "lose control of yourself" in a fit of rage. Or it may be violent only within your bodily chemism, while outwardly you seem to be poised and calm. Or, again, you may be unaware of the inner explosion that changes you from one type of feeling to another.

Our problem, then, is to discover which feelings, emotions, and attitudes lead to restful living.

A philosophy of life includes a constellation of attitudes. It usually contains an attitude toward oneself, an attitude toward one's parents, an attitude toward brothers and sisters, an attitude toward employers, teachers, policemen, doctors, dentists, grocers, street cleaners, musicians, and all the other kinds of folk we commonly encounter, an attitude toward pain, pleasure, sickness, death, and the whole uni-

verse. The older we are, the more things toward which we take definite attitudes. The more sensitive and thoughtful we are, the more closely do our many attitudes hang together in a well-knit system that is hard to break down. Finally, the earlier in life we take an attitude toward something, the stronger it grows, and hence the harder it is to change; for weaker attitudes revolve around it somewhat as planets around a central sun in dynamic equilibrium.

Attitudes are reflected in posture. Indeed, after his startling experiments with patients afflicted with curvature of the spine, Dr. Armitage Whitman, of New York City, goes so far as to call posture "an attitude of mind." He points out that mental attitude plays a vital part in treating such conditions as curvature of the spine. Treat the patient first, he says; then the disease. In some cases he reports that there is a high correlation between definite permanent improvement and the intelligence of the patient. That is, the more intelligent the victim, the better his chances of permanent recovery. No back is so crooked that it cannot be improved by effort. And many drastic corrective methods for treating curvatures would be unnecessary if doctors and patients understood the importance of mental attitude.

F. S. Hammett, way back in 1921, accomplished something much more than he set out to do when he experimented on 186 rats. He

was in search of the effects of the removing of the parathyroid gland. He operated on these rats, removing that gland. Ninety of the rats were standard wild stock, while the others had been born and raised in a laboratory and had therefore always been accustomed to the presence and touch of human beings. The wild rats had all of the usual suspicions and fears of their greatest enemy, man.

Seventy-two of the wild rats quickly developed tetany and died. But only 13 of the tame rats did so.

Hammett seems not to have realized the further implication of his experiment. It was first seen by Dr. Joshua Rosett, of the Department of Neurology of Columbia University. Rosett pointed out that it was the fear in the wild rat that lowered his resistance to the loss of the gland. He did not come to this conclusion by mere guess, but by long previous observation of the effects of bad attitudes and emotions on people who developed some of the many forms of tetany, such as the neurotics, the epileptics and the hysterics.* Annoyances of all kinds upset the chemical and mechanical equilibrium of the normal body unless the creature has been specially trained.

How does all this apply to you and to

* See The Epileptic Seizure, Its Relation to Normal Thought and Normal Action. *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry*, April, 1929, Vol. 21, pp. 731-794.

your philosophy of life? Quite directly. Learn to carry yourself in harmony with your deepest convictions, your strongest interests, and your broadest views. Hold your head, direct your eyes, drape your arms, and place your legs philosophically. If you believe you are a worm of the dust, crawl like a worm of the dust. If you feel you are a conqueror, hold your head high and look down on common folks in the best Mussolini manner. Be consistent, at least in this matter of acting as you feel.

Our public schools ought to take a leaf from the textbooks of the soldiers and tyrants. Let them cease to hold children rigidly in their seats and in complete silence unless they want the children to develop attitudes and beliefs which harmonize with routine, with mechanical obedience, and with speechlessness. Oddly enough, our Army leaders are years ahead of our schools; for they have long since humanized attitudes among the soldiers. The old Prussian stiffness and brutality has gone. The way the privates stand at attention and the manner of their march resemble the postures and strides of free men in an enlightened society. If you doubt this, watch the parade ground at any Army post.

DESIRES AND NEEDS

Many people cannot relax because they cannot distinguish between desires and needs.

A desire is a bodily process that impels you to seek out a specific object or activity and, having found or attained it, to do something with or about it. Having done this, the desire subsides for a time.

A need, on the other hand, is a thing or activity which contributes in some essential way to either the physical, mental, or social well-being of a person or a group. Without such a need, one cannot enjoy "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

A child may desire to have the moon, but certainly does not need it. The schoolboy may wish to appear as a hero before his fellows and, to that end, jump off a bridge into perilous rapids, but neither the wish nor the act helps to assure his physical, mental, or social well-being. A prosperous business man may desire to accumulate a million dollars on the stock market. But the desire and its fulfillment do not aid in his own well-being. The schoolboy may think that he cannot be happy unless his mates look upon him as a hero. The business man may sincerely believe that his happiness will be jeopardized unless he can accumulate his fortune. But both schoolboy and business man think wrongly.

The discovery of needs and the proper manner of satisfying them is accomplished by intelligence. And this marks the need off more or less vividly from the simple desire, which is a spontaneous physical process connected with

an indescribable variety of things, good, bad, and indifferent, in which appetites, imitative impulses, habit, and ideas true and false alike may all mingle with the utmost confusion. Even the lower animals desire things and seek the objects of desire unaided by intelligence. But only the intelligent being can discriminate between desires and needs. For the very notion of a need is one that cannot be attained until after we have reflected upon and found the norms of well-being, such as health, social standing, and the like, and have by experiment and analysis discerned some of their causes and effects.

One reason why relatively high intelligence is required in discerning needs is that *needs, unlike desires, are often objectless and even totally unsensed*. Desires, in other words, set up specific tensions relative to specific objects or activities. In a sense, when we desire something, "we know what we want when we want it." If denied the object of our desire, we fail to get *appropriate* relaxation. But at least we know what will relax these tensions. Save in some very peculiar and rare pathological cases, no man ever desires without desiring a definite thing. Desire and object of desire almost invariably go together.

But how different with our needs! Seldom do we know exactly what we need. And only too often do we insist upon pursuing to the bitter end some desired thing, firm in the belief

that it is just what we need, only to learn too late that it is not of the slightest benefit to us.

The desires that are aroused when we suffer from an obscure unfulfilled need commonly mislead us as to the nature of that need. A fairly well-known instance of this is the vague depressions and erratic desires that are induced by certain kinds of astigmatism. Here the sufferer is likely to desire absolute quiet and freedom from bright light. He wishes to exercise rather violently and to skim through books and papers which he has to read. All the time he may not be aware of the slightest discomfort in his eyes; indeed, he may even laugh at the oculist who tells him that he must wear glasses. In his depressive state, he may wish to change his vocation and move to a different part of the world where, as he fancies, he will be able to work with more enthusiasm.

I have observed three cases of this sort. In each of these, the events demonstrated that the sufferers needed absolutely nothing but glasses to correct their slight astigmatism. As soon as they had worn the glasses a week or so, all the morbid desires and aversions vanished forever.

Here you see the difficulty of locating the tensions set up by certain types of needs, for no appropriate mechanism has been built up in the nervous system whereby many needs can be discovered through appetites and satisfied

through appetitive reactions. In the cases I have just mentioned, only a highly developed technique, such as the modern oculist possesses, can detect the true disturbance of bodily equilibrium and its remedy.

There are innumerable other cases like these. It often happens that people who crave alcohol seek to fulfill some underlying need of which the drinkers are unaware, or, if they know of the need, they fail to associate it with their desire for drink. Thus a mill hand who has been sweating ten hours around hot metal and is thoroughly exhausted may have a genuine need for water, and also for quick muscular relaxation, both of which are satisfied by drinking large quantities of cheap whisky much diluted. Again, when he goes home at the day's end, he may find a supper waiting for him which consists of soggy pork and potatoes fried in grease, with a pot of over-boiled tea on the side strong enough to derange any stomach. Such a diet sets up a series of disturbances with more or less distressing consequences and accompaniments that are relieved by drinking liquor. Here is the reason for the old saw about drunkards being made in the kitchen quite as often as in the saloon.

The true need here is for properly balanced and well-prepared rations, but rare indeed is the drinker who will believe this until after he has been forced to try it out.

Another type of alcoholic craving grows out of nervous strain and worry. Here the true need is for prompt and innocent nervous relaxation. But of this the drinker is not often conscious, though he may be.

All such misleading desires owe their peculiar character to the absence of a bodily mechanism connecting the true need with its appropriate satisfier. There is, however, a chain of connections which can be used to enlighten and then to control such disturbers of the peace. To this chain we give no name, but we call the result of its working "knowledge" or "science." Observation, analysis, and inference are the links of the chain. When well forged, it will anchor us securely against all drifting and shipwreck.

You see what I mean. There is only one sure way to gain the upper hand over the dark processes of the human body, and that is the way of the objective investigator, the laboratory, the test tube, and the clinic. To get at the heart of an obscure tension, go to the physiologist, to the physician, and to the psychologist. Do not trust your own amateur guessing. And beware of wishful thinking!

MISFIT WISHES

The causes of harmful tensions vary greatly in the amount of space and time they

occupy. Usually, the larger they are, the harder they are to break down.

Consider what causes a craving to persist. Then consider the ways and means of appeasing that craving. You will then see what I mean.

One man's ambition is to be another Napoleon. Another's is to run the best bakery in Bakersville. A third man has no ambition in this larger sense; he lives from moment to moment, a creature of transient appetites, each one of which involves a little thing and a few minutes of planful thinking: a week-end trip to New York, meeting the village belle, winning a turkey at the church raffle, and so on.

Now isn't it plain that the things to do, the places to go, and the people to see are vastly more numerous if you crave to rule all Europe than if you aspire to be the best baker in Bakersville? Each item in a wish field sets up its own system of tensions in the person striving to fulfill that wish. The wish field spreads through time as well as through space. It may cover ten years of planned action. So some tensions must persist over the entire period, if the aspirant envisages the whole desire from the outset. But the simple fellow whose sole urge today is to win that turkey at the raffle is tense in a very simple manner; the field of his cravings is diminutive, the elements in that field few, and the relations among them not at all intricate.

The chances are that few muscle fibres remain tense for long in our simple fellow as he sighs for that turkey. He is not likely to suffer a nervous collapse while awaiting the drawing of the raffle ticket. But our would-be Napoleon must always have some tense spots in him, year in and year out. And unless he is a master of relaxation, he will break down in time. To be sure, the men who rise to heights similar to those reached by Napoleon are just such masters; they can fall asleep in a twinkling, eat at any hour, break up their night without effort, endure defeats which would shatter a common mind, and hold in clear view masses of detail which would befuddle even a fairly superior person. But, alas, not one man in a thousand who pursues vast ambitions is blessed with such skill in taking things easy. Graveyards and asylums are crowded with the remnants of overstrained humanity.

Isn't it obvious that *each of us must fit his wishes to his powers?* Surely this is no profound discovery. Men have understood it more or less lucidly ever since their world first widened out and disclosed great opportunities. Fools say that anybody can become President of the United States, or that the sky is the limit for the man who dares. But the wise know that many ambitions are like pants bought from a mail order house. They look splendid in the catalogue; but when they come, they are too big

around the waist and too long in the legs, and the stripe isn't half so pretty as in the picture. Selected as a result of reading books, an ambition is too often a misfit. The youth who adopts it deems himself a misfit in later years, because he has not been able to measure up to the tasks. This is a pity, for the youth is all right. Only his ideals have been wrong. The world is fuller of misfit ideals than of misfit people.

HOW FIT WISHES AND AMBITIONS TO YOUR MEASURE?

To select a career and a system of pleasures which are nicely adjusted to your energy pattern as well as to the world wherein you dwell, you must minutely investigate both yourself and your surroundings. A large order! An order which no school nor any other institution accepts! This all important task is still left to each individual. (What better proof that our new America has not yet found itself!) Somehow he must dig up for himself whatever accurate information may be available about his own skill and aptitudes. Somehow he must study affairs and discern in them tendencies which indicate the changing prospects in various careers.

He is sure to find something of value if he studies my earlier volumes, *The Psychology of Achievement* and *More Power To You!*. These deal with the personality problems, not

with the social and economic. The latter must be investigated through current periodicals. All too little appears there, but that little is precious.

The man who has thought clean through his philosophy of life knows what he wants, how to go about getting it, and what not to strive for. He thereby prevents upsets of a graver sort.

But, alas, most of us have fuzzy, spotted, warped, and otherwise imperfect insights into ourselves. Then too we are thrown into strange situations which call for quick action; and we lack time to get our bearings. So we blunder. We think we must have this new auto, or that fur coat. We feel our whole future depends upon joining a fashionable club. We simply must meet the famous Mr. Snootie. But we haven't the price of the new auto. A strange dowager snaps up the fur coat under our very eyes. The admissions committee of the fashionable club refuses to enroll us. And Mr. Snootie catches an early train, leaving us high and dry. Then we grow furious. We quiver. We fear nobody loves us. We sink into gloom, the gloom of pariahs. We are thwarted personalities. Social cripples. Life is not worth living. Please page the undertaker.

Each such emotion is a system of tensions, as well as a chemical change in the blood stream. Let the anger or fear or depression persist, and the body may suffer cruelly.

Need we let the emotion persist? No.

EMOTIONS AND ATTITUDES ARE LEARNABLE

Intelligent people can develop feelings, attitudes and emotions that prevent them from growing tense. For these are almost as learnable as carpentering and bricklaying. They are induced by definite movements of the body and its finer parts. There is nothing in or about them that cannot be clearly demonstrated by way of example or by way of analysis. Furthermore, almost anybody can be taught to link a given emotion or attitude with a given stimulus that is not, by its own nature, wholly alien to the response. True, I will not guarantee to train you to feel angry whenever a bell rings, for in your past many a bell has been rung within your hearing without angering you. But a persistent experimenter might start in with a baby and train it to respond in this eccentric fashion. And many a fond mother has, without realizing it, brought up her little darling in emotional habits hardly a whit less silly than rage at bells.

Most people are emotional illiterates. Unread and untaught in the lore of feelings and attitudes, they blunder and bungle through life, from rage to fear, from worry to passion, using these released energies with little skill. They do not know when it is profitable to give vent to anger and when to throttle it down. They imagine that some emotions are noble and others

ignoble. And, worst of all, they fuse ideas with feelings in such a fashion that all their opinions are sentimentalized and all their sentiments rationalized.

Here, as usual, our schools are to blame. They offer very little emotional education. Here and there a few rare teachers and principles devote more time to building up sound attitudes and feelings than to the usual claptrap of the curriculum. For nearly all people a well balanced emotional life is vastly more important than a well balanced intellectual career. Had I to choose between the ability to remain serene through adversities and the ability to speak fluent German, I should not hesitate by as much as a split second. Were I compelled to accept either a happy philosophy of life or a profound grasp of calculus, I'd pick the former, of course. When I am called upon to recommend somebody for a professional position, I always favor the candidate who shows poise and amiability over the somewhat abler candidate who shows ill temper or any other emotional unbalance. For, in the long run, the former will travel further than the latter. A well managed school would rate young people in like manner. Some day this will be the practice.

Nearly all of us show irrational feeling at some situations and toward some persons. Other feelings might have been learned origi-

nally, and these present feelings can be unlearned, though with widely varying degrees of difficulty. If one of them happens to be reinforced by a large system of experiences, it yields slowly to change—and it is well that it does so, for the odds are that it has a firm foundation in the realities. Dread of snakes, for instance, is much better established in a multitude of experiences than fear of walking under a ladder. The former may be broken down only through unusual discipline; the latter can often be hooted out of one's nervous system by an authoritative hooter.

Here is a thumbnail sketch of a highly intelligent woman who learned to change her attitudes and emotions so that, within a year or two, she redesigned her entire life.

Like many another able Thespian, she was a lusty exhibitionist. Unlike most others, she had the bad luck to succeed brilliantly in her first rôle. A rash manager promised that he would make her another Bernhardt and would guarantee her a leading part in any play he put on. The wine dizzied her. Upstage she went, and upstage she tried to live.

To demonstrate her cosmic importance, she began to absent herself from rehearsals. She even ventured to appear late at regular performances, so that the audience had to chew on its fingernails a while. She flared up over trifles. She nagged the lesser members of her company

until some of them rebelled openly. Her manager, now disillusioned, skilfully coddled her until the season ended.

A few weeks later he launched plans for the following winter. Our grand dame sailed airily into his office and asked about her forthcoming duties. The author of the play was present to sing her praises. He declared she was the ideal for his title rôle.

"Huh," snorted the manager, "I wouldn't have that hussy around at any price. She's a public nuisance."

A woman of weaker design would either have fainted or blown up and flung the furniture about. Our heroine did neither. She calmly promised never again to show temper or indulge in her up-stage stuff. She chose clearly between the greater display before a public and the lesser display of lording it over the company off stage.

But this decision failed at first to bring her exhibitionist rages under full control. True, she never again stirred up a fracas with her play-fellows or with her manager; and she never showed up late at performances. But she diverted her violence toward people elsewhere.

She had a quarrel with her landlady which culminated in a wild smash-up of bric-a-brac and furniture. The landlady summoned the police. Seven of them finally overcame the Fury and dragged her into the street. She clamored

for a taxi, but they tugged her on foot to the station house, then to court.

The judge called the case for the next day at two.

"I'll try to be here," said our grand dame.

"You'll stay here then," said his Honor.

They locked her up in a cell.

That ended her career of violence. She learned fast. Finding that some of her best friends now despised her and were dropping her quietly from their social lists, she grew amiable—almost to a fault. Broadway managers liked her but complained mildly of her occasional lack of fire. So she learned a still better design of life.

Today she thinks out calmly the place and time for rage. When she does blow up, it works like a well placed stick of dynamite in a blasting operation.

A newspaper editor tells me about his attitude toward his work. I quote him because he has a well timed, smooth philosophy of life which keeps him fit in the midst of alarms.

"When I have fifteen things to do as I enter the office in the morning," says he, "I don't get excited because I know that before the day is over these will be weeded down to five or six. Then too, I try to emulate an old New York editor who was called up by the long distance operator about the great California earth-

quake. After the operator had roused him from sound sleep and spilled the great news, the editor said 'Thanks' and hung up.

"Never allow any event to excite you. Once excited, you cannot report it well. The all-around successful reporter is a cold fish who never loses his head. A dog fight and the assassination of the President of the United States by the President of the D. A. R. are both treated as historical events by him. He gets the facts and writes them up in standard office style, then goes out for a cup of coffee."

This man is seldom plagued with serious tensions in that tensest of environments—the busy office of a great newspaper. Like all others of his kind, he enjoys a state of relative rest longer and oftener than anybody else (save the freak who wants nothing at all). He is relaxed longer and oftener. He becomes tense only during moments of hard drive; and then his tensions are well integrated and serve him admirably.

Like the veteran boxer, he knows precisely when to let fly full force in order to knock out his opponent. And he takes it easy before and after that instant. Like the tennis champion, he allows his arms to hang loose between strokes, but then swings at exactly the right split-second and in exactly the right direction. He acts strictly *in design*. He has a time-space pattern that fits both his inner energies and the

outer situation where he seeks to accomplish certain results. This pattern always has a single focal point; it is the here-and-now. Around this everything else is organized. It excludes the nature of "things as they are" and concentrates on the "Everlasting Now."

EMOTIONS, GOOD AND BAD

We appraise an emotion as good if it relaxes us or prevents us from growing tense. And we deem it bad if it works reversely. We do not say that rage is evil, while love is good. Rage may on one occasion relieve a worse tension and on another occasion mess us up. So too with love. So too with any emotion having a name. Grief is surely unpleasant, as a rule; yet we all know the benefits of "a good cry." Soft-hearted submission to a loved one is often pleasant; yet it may bring on serious tensions, if practised over much or under certain inauspicious conditions.

The commonest evil result of strong emotions develops somewhere in the digestive tract. Sometimes the throat goes horribly tense. Again it is the stomach which tightens up so badly that it cannot perform the digestive movements. At other times it is the colon, whose spasms bring on constipation and ulcers and appendicitis. Such disasters are never brought on

by a single emotional shock that passes after a few minutes. They come only after many prolonged tensions of fear, worry, or anger have set up a habit in the muscles. This habit deranges some function. The deranged function disturbs the blood supply, the nerve currents, the movements and the total metabolism of the afflicted part of the body. And the disease arrives.

Stomach ulcers are often caused by tensions induced by overstrain, worry, and fears. They can be cured by relaxing. Witness the remarkable cures recently reported by four Columbia University professors at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Thirty-two sufferers recovered after listening to lectures by a psychologist on tensions and relaxing. At the end of each lecture the listeners drank cold water. That was the entire treatment. At the end of six weeks all but two were eating whatever they liked. One of the physicians who organized this clinic testifies that, after having treated his own stomach ulcer for sixteen years in all ways recommended by physicians, he gave up and tried this simple psychological method. He was cured in short order.

Relief from worry cures patients suffering from severe and sometimes fatal disorders of the digestive tract, after all known medical means have failed to bring about lasting improvement. Dr. Albert J. Sullivan, of the Yale

University School of Medicine, recently reported these cures "as if by magic" to the American Gastro-Enterological Association.

The patients were victims of ulcerative colitis. Dr. Sullivan believes that emotional disturbances cause three-quarters of all such cases. How do these upsets work such havoc? Through a sort of digestive self-cannibalism. Emotions acting through the brain's nerve centers sometimes over-stimulate the digestive tract. The latter becomes so hyperactive that it begins to digest its own surface.

Victims of the disorder have remarkably similar characteristics. Most of them are between twenty and thirty. They are highly intelligent, neat to the point of fussiness, and emotionally tense though outwardly calm. Hence they are emotionally blocked, since they cannot respond promptly and directly to the emotional stimuli, thus relieving their tensions. One patient described this common characteristic of the group thus: "When I get into a quarrel or some unpleasant thing comes up, I stew over it for three or four days." And then trouble begins.

These worried colitis sufferers were treated not by medicine but by being persuaded to tell their troubles to the doctor. They discussed their feelings for the few days preceding the digestive upset. And most of the patients recovered completely as soon as they had unburdened themselves to the physician. Remark-

ably enough, the few who refused to talk about their feelings, or to admit the relation between emotional and digestive upset, failed to recover from the ulcerative colitis.

Plainly we are on the threshold of a new psychotherapy. And its firm foundation will be this art of relaxation. It will not be hypnotism nor psychoanalysis nor religion nor any of the other methods which have been tried with little success during the past generation. It will start with emotional education and end up with drill in some carefully reasoned philosophy of life stripped of all nonsense and all guessing.

The sympathetic doctor with insight into human nature is the best friend of over-emotional people.

Here is a woman who for many years has been plagued with violent emotional upsets that accompany the ups and downs of a love affair. The slightest trouble throws her completely off inner balance, though outwardly she remains poised. Frequently she is so upset that she cannot eat for two or three days at a time. When the inner chaos grows unbearable, she visits a stern but kindly physician with whom she may discuss her woes as objectively as a chemist reporting the reactions of a solvent. The doctor listens, reflects, discusses the situation briefly. This done, the patient's mind is usually clarified, her pent-up emotions fade away as she unburdens herself, and she leaves the doctor's

office with the appetite of a stevedore. On one occasion she threatened suicide. The doctor assured her that if she was stupid and inferior enough to contemplate such "shabby behavior," she might well leave this overburdened world, already plagued with too many hundreds of thousands of her flabby kind. The shrewd physician gauged her intelligence well enough to know that such an insult hurled at a woman who prides herself on her superiority is vastly more effective than sympathy or medicaments. He was correct. She marched out of his office, indignant and wrathful, secretly convinced of the doctor's accuracy. When next heard from, she was going about her business with zest and competence.

Many people fail to realize the value of "getting your troubles off your chest." The reticent and self-contained resent any discussion of their personal problems with friends and acquaintances. And they seldom realize what enormous aid to relaxation their doctors can bring. The physician's professional approach to all problems makes him a sympathetic reservoir for the discussions of emotions that, when aired, often vanish with lightning speed.

RELAXING FROM SHOCK

New medical students, when first entering the operating room, grow faint and pan-

icky. The veteran in charge corrects this upset by putting the men to work tearing up bandages, adjusting window shades, fetching pails of water, and what not. What is his underlying technique? It is *the energizing of many little lines of action to offset shock*.

When overtensed, we restore balance by one of two methods. We may either intensify some other phase or phases. Or else we may reduce activity to zero or close to zero. This latter is more difficult and is achieved best through deep sleep. Relaxation occurs in both techniques through *the equilibrating of forces*.

Let me report, first, a remarkable example of the first method. It is similar in pattern to the technique of restoring the medical students to balance.

A young woman whom I knew suffered a severe collapse as a result of brooding over her own unhappy existence with a husband who grated on her every nerve. She sank into apathy and grew so weak that she could scarcely stand erect. Physicians despaired of her. After many weeks of misery, the idea slowly formed in her consciousness that she would like to visit Niagara Falls. They sent her on the long journey with misgivings. And then the marvel. Within an hour after the nurse had rolled her wheel chair up to the brink of the cataract, the sick woman visibly improved. Within a week she was well. Years have passed, yet she has never

relapsed into her former state. Just what happened? Nobody knows. But something linked to the sight and sound of those tumbling torrents broke all the tensions set up by her marital mismating. Probably it was much like the soothing effect of the starry firmament, which has cast off many an evil spell since men first lifted their eyes to the constellations.

Do you now begin to see why social workers and psychologists urge people suffering from the shock of losing their jobs to keep busy and occupied? To learn some new trade or take up some engrossing study? It is not merely a matter of losing skills through prolonged idleness, thus increasing the dangers of permanent unemployment. It is even more a matter of mental health and balance. For by adding energy to new activities, of mind or of body, you tend to offset the tensions of shock and worry over insecurity by increased attention to other phases of experience.

Now let us study a striking case of a balance struck between a raw contact and feeling, on the one hand, and an attitude and perspective on the other. What is one of the most violent shocks of contact commonly experienced? Surely the contact of an aching tooth with the dentist's buzzing drill. Brrrr! This throws most people off their balance.

The severest test of your ability to relax comes when you step into your dentist's

chair and watch him tune up his snarling little steel drills. In a few minutes, the drills will chew into a nerve and explode something up in your brain. You know it will hurt you horribly. So you build up a resistance to the torment. You pull every muscle tight as a drum head. Soon you are in a cold sweat, though the drill has not yet begun its task. When the dentist invades the privacy of your molars, you are already suffering miserably.

The good man bids you relax. Can you? Then the worst of your trouble is over. For taut muscles make all pain worse. Many people have learned this truth and have been able to control themselves accordingly. Not a few actually fall asleep while the operation proceeds. Thus Mussolini, according to his dentist. Thus, too, a highly nervous woman of my acquaintance who used to be prostrated by the dental drill. I assume that the mechanism here must closely resemble the "death feint" of frightened animals like the opossum. At any rate, it is brought on voluntarily as danger approaches and ends when danger has passed.

Simple relaxation has been learned by thousands, according to dentists I have interviewed. Not that the let-down is complete and wholly adequate. Far from it! At the worst hot waves of pain, the victim almost invariably goes rigid; but, if he has disciplined himself, he promptly eases up and feels better. But just

how does he bring himself to this degree of skill? Now we see the infinite variety of human nature.

Some people forget their sufferings in the dentist's chair by concentrating intensely upon the most painful experience of their lives. Others think only of the awfullest sufferings they have ever observed in other people. Still others dream of agonies worse than any they have ever known. This mechanism, you see at once, is at bottom the same as the other one we find in people who rid themselves of tense worries by going out to look at people much worse off than themselves, as in the case of the bank president who finds relief by strolling down to the slum lodging houses and watching the down-and-outs.

Recently the Christian Science patient of a dentist friend of mine became violently nauseated and nearly fainted at the first sight of the instruments to be used. The dentist had not touched her. She was unable to remain in the chair, and left to telephone her healer. "A treatment," she explained, "will surely help me." A few minutes' conversation with the healer gave her complete calm and repose, and she returned to the painful task without the slightest evidence of fear or discomfort. Some weeks later the woman felt a similar attack coming on her the moment she stepped into the

chair. She was excused for a few minutes—retired into the dressing room—and gave herself a “treatment.” Again she returned, and again she was perfectly relaxed and endured an hour’s work with ease. Here, of course, is the submissive attitude at its most effective.

Many people, probably weak in fantasy, must focus on some visible object close at hand. They watch a fly crawl up a window. They count letters on the bottle labels in the dentist’s cabinet. Still others fall back on reciting inwardly some familiar verse or formulas, even the multiplication table. And a few others, who happen to include myself, systematically relax at given points, such as the wrists or the larynx or the ankles, thus starting a wave of change throughout the body.

Here again the mechanism of balance works toward equating the forces. Either (1) the other phases of experience are intensified up to the level of the toothache—or as close to it as possible, or (2) the toothache is dropped close to zero intensity, as in the case of deep sleep. Simple relaxation works toward equalizing the forces, but the violence of the pain is such that it alone cannot reduce the shock sufficiently. Hence hypnotic focussing of attention on a fly crawling up the wall or on the multiplication table, inwardly recited, tend to displace the technique of relaxing here.

HOW TO DEAL WITH FEARS

Forewarned is forearmed.

How few people have probed the truth of this old statement! Never was there a sillier lie than the stale remark: "What you don't know can't hurt you."

The truth is almost the precise opposite. The only thing that is sure to hurt is what you don't know. And nowhere is this more obvious than in situations causing tensions that upset us. The most devastating fears are fears of the unknown.

To be aware of a peril but not to understand it at all throws the human body into a chaos of impulses. We are pulled this way and that, all at once, yet without any clear plan of action. The many impulses interfere with one another, and the result is a flutter and futile turning.

To be walking through a wild forest and suddenly to realize that you are lost; to hear strange noises outside your bedroom window in the middle of the night; to be walking along a familiar road and suddenly be thrown flat on your face by some mysterious force (which you may, two minutes later, know to be an earthquake)—these are moments of supreme tension and panic. The very instant you know what the menace is, you begin to ease up.

Now, all this points to a simple rule.

Whenever you find yourself worrying, fearful, and tense, stop short and ask yourself: "Well, just what am I worrying about? Of what am I afraid?" And cast about for the correct answer until you have found it. Then your troubles will be half over. I know it may take a long time to solve the problem. But never mind! Stick at the inquiry. For the very act of seeking the answer itself reduces your tensions somewhat.

Having analyzed the factors that lead to your fears, you can then begin to plan intelligently. As soon as you do this, you cease to be frightened. Like the fireman, you do not break out in a cold sweat when you see a house ablaze. You know each move in the crisis, just as you know a chess opening you are fond of playing. *Knowing what to do next breaks down fear. It dissolves fear tensions and frees the muscles for adaptive behavior.*

When wrestling with a difficult situation that is sure to continue for long, learn to break it down into units of twenty-four hours each. Then deal with each day's task, forgetting utterly the scores or hundreds of days beyond tomorrow. Stop trying to solve the entire problem at once.

This is the essence of that rugged old British opportunism which men sometimes call "muddling along." It is one of the soundest rules of mental health ever laid down. "Suf-

ficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Whoever has taken this to heart and practised it has added a cubit to his stature.

It is a special application of that wise old rule: "Divide and conquer." What we cannot do all at once we often can do piecemeal. Taking things as they come and refraining from the impossible adventure of settling all of your tomorrows today must make relaxing much simpler. Hence it improves your style and so betters your chances of long-range success.

ANNOYANCES

Are you easily upset by trifles? Is your private zoo full of the little foxes that spoil the grapes? Probably. For petty annoyances are the curse of our race. And tremendous are their consequences. Let an accumulation of petty annoyances upset you day after day, and you fall victim to inner deadlocks. The deeper your tensions and the more they pile up, the more violently do you react to trifles. Every fresh disturbance knocks you off even keel.

The behavior of people is more commonly a source of annoyance than that of animals or the effect of inanimate things. If you annoy or are annoyed by others, mutual tensions are set up, and you fail in some momentary adjustment. Yet today, if you fall short in any one, you may even wreck your life. One

attack of rage may cost you your job. One irritated remark to a prospective employer may nip a career in the bud. One annoying comment to the banker who holds your mortgage may leave you, bag and baggage, on the street. One violent objection to doing work below your abilities or being supervised by your youngers may find you in the breadline.

Throughout the long list of requirements for workers today, there runs a single refrain. "WANTED: GOOD PERSONALITY." This means the ability to get along with others, or to see to it that you are not made tense yourself nor set up tensions in others.

Thanks to the long and careful study of Hulsy Cason * of several thousand common annoyances reported by nearly seven hundred subjects at the University of Rochester, we have scientific and extremely significant records of the commonest annoyances that plague mankind. We shall discuss only a few of these Tremendous Trifles, all of which make people tense in some measure. Unless you're a freak, these petty disturbers upset you time after time. Furthermore you probably make others tense by your own annoying habits. Says Cason, "A study and analysis of the annoying acts in one's behavior repertoire should and doubtless will reduce the tension and increase the pleasure in

full details, see *Common Annoyances: A Psychological Study of Every-day Aversions and Irritations*. 1930.

numerous social relationships." I go much further. The cumulative tensions arising from either annoying or being annoyed by others may mark the difference between chronic unemployment and a fine career, between healthy adjustment and a nervous breakdown, between a well ordered life and years disrupted by chaos.

It is your problem to avoid both annoying and being annoyed. Nor is this so difficult as it may seem. For unchangeable characteristics of people do not annoy others nearly so much as do clothes, manner of dress, and minor physical characteristics and habits that can be changed. Of all the annoyances reported, only 28% were concerned with non-human things and activities, and only 5% had to do with fixed personality traits.

If little things make you tense or if you annoy others, your first duty is to analyze the annoyances. Study first the types of people who are most easily annoyed. Then watch your step in dealing with them. Are you a salesman? Or a personnel manager? Or a youth looking for a job? Or a society matron? No matter what your status, you spend most of your life trying to get along well with others. What kinds of people are most likely to be annoyed? Probably you haven't the slightest idea. Here, then, is a partial answer to a vital question.

One of the most significant facts emerging from Cason's study is this: The better one

is educated, the less is he annoyed. Subjects having grammar and high school and various types of special education were annoyed to almost the same degree. Those having college training were less so, and those with post-graduate training least of all. The implication is clear. College people are usually more intelligent and better integrated than people of less education. Being highly superior, they are ruled by their brains. Furthermore, they use their brains more than do others. As Frederick Tilney has demonstrated, through sheer volume of thinking (*not* revery), we insulate the nerve fibres against leakages of energy and nervous impulses running wild. We develop superior control of the associative processes. And the better the control, the less one is likely to be annoyed or made tense by irrelevant stimuli.

People's annoyability varies with age, too. Young people between 10 and 25 are less annoyed than their elders. Annoyance then increases up to sixty, but decreases in old age. This is partly because old people are less sensitive than their youngsters. They hear, see, smell, taste, and feel less keenly. Besides, at sixty most men and women have achieved the simple life. Tremendous trifles no longer loom large in the broad panorama of more than half a century of adjustment to the world as it is—trifles and all.

At all ages women are on an average

more annoying than men. Men are more annoyed by a wide variety of disturbances than women. But they are seldom so greatly upset. On the other hand, many men are more annoying than many women.

Apparently stature influences annoyability to a certain extent. The combined average scores of both men and women suggest that tall people are less annoyed than medium or short people; that heavy men are less easily disturbed than men of medium weight, while, on the contrary, heavy women have a slight tendency to be more annoyed than women of medium weight. Apparently thin men and men slightly under weight are more annoying than fat men and men slightly overweight.

While health plays an important part in annoyability, Cason regards the correlations in most cases not highly reliable. Other investigators, however, have found that people who have been subject to disease and who have had a wider variety of diseases are more irascible than those who have had fewer diseases. Healthy people, of course, are commonly less tense all over than the unhealthy. They are less upset and recover faster from all sorts of disturbances.

Healthy people show a good-natured indifference to many things which vex and upset less richly endowed bodies. They cannot take life tragically. Nor are they easily made tense

by trifles. While annoyances may momentarily irritate and adversity anger them, their well-balanced personalities are not crushed nor turned from their purpose. This is a general tendency, of course. It does not describe many individuals with precision, for usually we find some oddity of pattern, some special way of balancing, or some marked dominant trait which leaves wide vents for the flow of energy here and narrow there. As a group, however, petty annoyances concern them little. But through sheer health and exuberance, they are often among the worst offenders in annoying others.

Bad social attitudes and language habits annoy us seriously. They crop up in needless criticism, argument, over-persuasion, over-aggressive attitudes and condescending behavior. People are commonly annoyed, they report, by "a person continually criticizing something," or "a salesman trying to force me to buy something" or "a person continually complaining about something," or "a person habitually arguing."

Only the other day, an extremely competent woman long unemployed lost a fine opportunity for which she was notably well-qualified only because of her infuriating habit of chronic argument. An artist at splitting hairs, she pecked at small points in conversation with a prospective employer and at the end of the

interview lost out to a much less competent applicant who was personally agreeable.

A young man I know lost one of his most valuable business contacts through nothing but his consistently dogmatic attitude. Donald Laird has studied annoying traits, and finds that, among others, the odds are about a million to one that exhibiting superiority will cause a person to be disliked. Study your own behavior in the light of such annoyances. Ask your family and your intimate friends whether you show any such characteristics. Don't be your own judge, for the chances are very great that your own analysis of your annoying habits and traits will be virtually worthless.

When made tense by others, shift your attitude at once. Study your own tension and the offenders' annoying habits. If bored, practise some of the methods of escaping boredom described in my book, *More Power to You*. Assume, furthermore, a point of view which may at first seem strange.

When annoyed by other people's beliefs, convictions, dogmas, and attitudes as revealed in language, remember that you do not and never can "get the other fellow's point of view." People rarely (if ever) put into words exactly what they mean. They cannot convey to you—nor can you to them—the total experience, observations, deductions, interpretations, emotions, and so on that underlie all

language. Language is only a symbol—and at very best a poor one—of what seem to people to be “facts.” Furthermore, most of us have such poor vocabularies and crude language habits that all sorts of distortions of “fact” and meaning confuse both talkers and listeners.

When statements of belief, opinion, and conviction annoy you, then, do not accept the other fellow's words as expressing precisely what he means. Always give him the benefit of the doubt. Assume that he, like you, cannot put into words all the relevant “facts” as he sees them. Assume, too, that his words may, and often do mean something quite different to him than they do to you. If he annoys you, you take issue with him on widely separated battle grounds. His ways of thinking and acting differ forever from your own. And no matter how well you think you know any individual, he remains throughout life a stranger to you. Be charitable for the best of all reasons— You know not whereof you speak!

Tensions of Maladjustment

PROFOUND MALADJUSTMENTS

THE simple methods we have been commending will be of scant help to the profoundly maladjusted person. A woman whose love life has been deeply frustrated or a man whose career has been blasted, with deep injury to his self-esteem, will benefit not at all from those tricks of muscle manipulation. True, they may obtain relief for a few hours, but the strains will all return to plague them.

You see, their total behavior is involved; for they are inwardly striving—on the level of imagery, dream, and subconscious motor set—to do and to be something which they cannot do or be. The impulse comes from the highest nervous centers. It is the expression of the baffled personality. It is a patterned drive to change things in many important respects; so the strength of each particular phase of that drive is much greater than the strength of a merely local reaction. This is the regular effect of highly organized conduct.

A mother mourning a dead child may

develop insomnia. Possibly she can fall asleep if she counts sheep jumping over a fence; but does anybody imagine that this gets at the heart of her trouble? She will lie awake again and again; and the sheep will not come to her rescue always. She must build up a behavior pattern as large and as strong as the old one which centered around her dead child. This requires time, patience, and courage. It often requires the remodelling of the entire philosophy of life. It must evoke a "change of heart," a "fresh outlook," a "new insight"—in short, something like a religious conversion.

No amount of relaxing of neck muscles or hands or legs will create such emotional and intellectual transformations. You might as well push back the tides by splashing away on the beach with your hands. Keep this well in mind as you approach the two grand divisions of human maladjustment, those which arise from money matters and those which spring from love. Men find the fullest expression of their personalities all too often in power, especially the power that wealth brings. Women find happiness in love. Blocking power in men or love in women leads to larger upsets than those we have thus far been considering. So we must expect graver obstacles to relaxation.

When money is tight, people get that way too. Money isn't the root of all evil, but lack of it is the seed of human disorder. And

the disorder usually starts with straining to get more cash.

"If I only had the income I used to get, I wouldn't be reading this book of yours," says a frank friend. With this tip I am compelled to set down a few observations on the art of breaking down the strains and stresses of poverty. The true preventive technique requires no comment. For to avoid getting worked up over money problems, all you have to do is to get some money before you break down. As I am not writing a book on how to beat the Stock Exchange and Monte Carlo, I pass by this burning issue.

Seriously, though, there is a lesser technique of prevention which must be discussed here, and that is the development of a philosophy of life which puts money in its place. Thousands of Americans sense this need, and hundreds have given expression to it. I state it very broadly when I tell you that he who neither scorns nor worships money keeps calm and well most easily. The wise man understands the difference between living and making a living. He sees money as a convenient but not indispensable tool for getting things which help us live well. He sees that a certain amount of genuine wealth is necessary for the comfort and happiness of well educated people. Some of this wealth can be obtained without money.

Some must be bought in the open market. So the practical question reduces to this: What is the least I must buy with cash in order to rid myself of worry, fear, and loss of self-respect?

Each man and each neighborhood will answer this somewhat differently. Retired Northerners can be quite happy on a tiny garden plot in Florida or Texas in a pleasant community; for they have few requirements and can meet many of these by their own mild efforts in the garden and at the sewing machine. But a Florida family that retired to dwell on a New Hampshire hill would find a harsher answer to the problem. A man's habitual standard of living blends with his location in determining what he does for himself and what he buys.

But the past five years have opened the eyes of millions. They have been compelled to get along on less money than they used to strew about as tips, in the flush, foolish days. And, wonder of wonders! It isn't half so hard as they imagined at first. Only sickly people need servants around the house. Artichokes and mushrooms aren't half so good in the long run as ham and eggs. Fashionable garb may be pretty, but it adds not a minute to a woman's life; nor does it ward off measles. And the free beauties of this world outglory all of man's manufactured charms and splendors. The noblest cathedral is a

mere jumble of rocks when contrasted to a mountain. No painting ever equalled a Grade B sunset.

I do not extol the pleasures of poverty. Rather do I advertise the pleasures from which men turn when they grow rich and go social. The distinction is vital. Sunsets are not property at all. Neither prince nor pauper has any hold upon them. I feel certain that there will never be a corner on the sunset market. All the greater pity, then, that, as wealth accumulates and men decay, profiteers invent petty pleasures which they can sell at fancy prices to fools. And fools succumb to the lure.

It costs a hundred times more to bask in the sun at Palm Beach than to bask in it on a tenement roof. But the Palm Beach sun isn't more than twice as good for basking; the air around it is clearer, and the whiff of sea adds to its tonic. Until lately, nobody with the Palm Beach price in his pocket would dream of lolling naked on a housetop.

Social lure, the pull of the herd, ballyhoo, and sundry fictions combine to trick men and women to forsake the better for the worse and to buy shoddy instead of substance. It can be proved that an American need spend only \$500 a year in order to get everything he truly needs for comfort and health. I know—and perhaps you know too—clever people who manage on considerably less than that. (I'm

not referring to noble souls nor to ascetics who stay thin on reconditioned crusts.) Now, according to their skills and their neighborhoods, people may create their own wealth; perhaps only a few hundred dollars a year or perhaps a thousand or more. They have plenty of time, in this era of short working hours. Few are toiling more than forty hours a week; so they have fully another forty in which to create new wealth for themselves.

When I say new wealth, I do not mean money. I mean the things that money buys: fresh lettuce in the garden, a shingle or two to stop a leak in the roof, new buttons on a tattered shirt, a splash of tulip in the back yard, close to the kitchen steps, a stack of firewood, checkers and chess, a song or two, a quiet hour. . . . The list has no end save that set by the will of man.

But city dwellers can't grow lettuce. They have no leaky roofs to patch, no back yards in which to grow a tulip or two. Right! Every place must devise its own list, as I said. I know people who get a million dollars a year of wealth out of the reading rooms of public libraries, out of playgrounds, out of waterfront parks, out of zoological gardens, out of free concerts. Metropolitan wealth is one thing, rustic wealth another. And it is for you, not for me, to say which kinds of wealth you can create for yourself. Maybe you choose to scrape

a 'cello by the hour—or invent crossword puzzles. Have it your way! All I insist on is the eternal truth that anybody at all resourceful and energetic can fashion his time and energy into wealth.

City people have largely lost the art of creating wealth for themselves. They have been taught to expect all things from all men. They have been trained to perform one little job passably well and to draw on the rest of the world for all necessities and comforts. Even their sports are passive. They sit on the bleachers and watch others play baseball; they themselves never play. They sit in motion picture houses and watch heroes strive against villains for the favor of heroines; but they themselves strive not at all. They turn the dial of the radio and listen to a whole world of thought and music and drama; but they never think nor sing nor do things off the job. All these forms of wealth—excellent as they are—do not suffice in an age of low incomes. Men must return to the broader skills, in order to overcome the money shortage.

To possess these skills is not enough. There must be added both the opportunity and the incentive to use them. But the ordinary large city offers neither. On the contrary, it thwarts both, and in no manner more surely than by forever parading before the masses vulgar rich folks, ostentation, false standards of taste, and

all the other tawdry trappings of the outmoded rich. The shop window, the newspaper advertisement, and the impudent style pictures which the Hollywood gang slip into the news reels (all paid advertisements palmed off on the sucker public as news!) keep alive the thought that, after all, it is better to be rich than poor.

Many a village has never suffered under this bombardment. So its inhabitants are happy. Nobody struts. Nobody swaggers. Nobody asserts himself as better than the crowd. Only a few silly little girls who read movie magazines grow tense with disappointment over their inability to dress like Jean Harlow. Life as a whole runs on sanely and serenely. Do you wonder then that wise students of human affairs everywhere are urging city people to move out into the little quiet places and learn to live again? The stir of impending exodus already shows on the surface. Tomorrow it will move the deeps.

To be at ease, put yourself in a place where the outer rhythms harmonize with your inner rhythms; where the tempo of the days is close to your own tempo; where necessity is the mother of fashion and modesty the matriarch of vogue; where men and women create for themselves more wealth than they buy; and where nobody is under compulsion to do the impossible.

Thus far I have been speaking of the

better half of America, those who can earn \$500 each or better in the course of a year and can spend it all on themselves. How about the other half? How about the millions who are still on relief rolls? The art of relaxation is, for themselves, entirely different. It is less a matter of inner controls, more a matter of remodelling their economic environment.

No amount of skill in relaxing one's muscles will break down the stomach tensions we call hunger and thirst. No ingenuity in taking things easy will correct the strain of overwork. And complete idleness will undermine the best philosophy of life. So we have only one recourse. We must change our factories, stores, government, and political programs so as to provide the elementals for the destitute. Thus and only thus can we end unrest and eventual rebellion among them.

Now we are plunged into the full fury of the grave social controversy. What shall we do with the seventy-odd million underprivileged Americans? I am not going to pen a political tract, but I must declare the obvious: three possible courses are open, and only one avoids universal disaster. We might turn all these unfortunates loose to shift for themselves—as William Randolph Hearst would doubtless prefer, in the spirit of Rugged Individualism. Or, secondly, we might go soft-hearted and keep them all on the dole forever, while the rest of

us work to support them. Or, finally, we might put them all to work creating new wealth chiefly for themselves, so that they could again become independent, or at least self-supporting. Which course do you prefer?

Tense America

A NEW America arises. It arises, not like a building planned by engineers and architects, but rather like a sea bottom lifted high above the billows by some titanic explosion deep under the waters. As it comes up into the sunlight, creatures native to its immemorial slime and heavy darkness perish. Gulls swarm over the new land, devour the dead, and as the surface dries, make nests there. As years slip by, other species move in. The face of the island brightens. Grasses spread over it. Little trees sprout. Pools of rain become tiny lakes. When the first explorer arrives, he does not suspect that he treads virgin soil.

America is still in the midst of such an upheaval. Forces as mighty as the plutonian have been lifting our continent higher and higher, making it ever more suited to nobler forms of life. Science and technology have caused this earthquake. Their speed has been a catastrophe. Had they spread their violence over a million years, nobody would have been upset. But they lifted us from the sea bottoms of

savagery into the sunlight of a first civilization within the span of one long life. The wonder is that any of us have survived.

What manner of land is this which the earthquakes have been lifting into view?

It is a land stripped of its best metals, trees and soil by millions of ruthless exploiters during the past five generations.

It is a land with tens of millions of acres once fertile but now wilderness beyond rehabilitation, thanks to the dull peasants who misused them.

It is a land swarming with a hundred races having irreconcilable religions, political ideas, business practices, and ideals.

It is a land which a few thousand scientists and technologists are swiftly remodelling into the finest site of a civilization that has ever been developed.

It is a land whose natural and human resources are already being managed by these same scientists and technologists with such skill that, despite appalling waste in the past and incredible stupidity and ignorance among present inhabitants, less and less human effort is needed to support workers in comfort. Since the depression began, the factory worker has been increasing his output per hour by nearly 5% annually, thanks to improved machines and methods. In 1930 certain operations in the making of an automobile required 150 workers for a given out-

put; today only 19 workers are used for the same output.

It is a land which requires fewer and fewer workers in the making of goods, but more and more in the rendering of services high and low.

It is a land flooded with superfluous workers in the fields where goods are made and with a shortage of workers in the service fields.

It is a land where this shift from scarcity to abundance has thrown tens of millions out of work, impoverishing vast regions, and forcing a colossal shifting of population and industries, with money losses so great that nobody dares compute them.

It is a land that moves swiftly toward a strange new economic order in which a handful of farmers feed the nation, a handful of auto workers furnish everybody with cars, a handful of artists entertain the world in talking pictures and over the radio, and a handful of engineers will build all our highways.

It is a land that will see much suffering, much restlessness and perhaps not a little rebellion during the painful years in which the superfluous millions mill about aimlessly, with nothing to do. Among these millions those who have been drilled to work hard and to aim high will suffer most keenly. Few will suffer physically, for goods will grow cheaper and distribution

better, while public relief measures will provide necessities more and more effectively. The gravest suffering will be mental—and temperamental. For all these people will know that they are unwanted misfits in a new world.

It is a land, finally, where nearly all work will be easy and slow, thanks to very short hours of labor and to the perfection of technology, which always aims to give mankind something for nothing—or as nearly that as possible.

This new America cannot be inhabited by the creatures which throve in it before its elevation. As well advise oysters to leave their shells and build grass huts up on shore. New environments fit new forms of life. What forms will prosper here during the coming generations?

How I wish I knew the answer to that question! In my boldest moment, I like to believe that I know perhaps one ten-thousandth of it. And it is this fragment which has been placed on exhibit in this book. Here you see, in crude outline, the foreshadow of the new American. His philosophy of life deviates from American tradition as the sea gull's philosophy deviates from the mollusk's. It is a philosophy of Restful Work and Busy Leisure.

These two ways of life are new. They are not improvements in old ways. They are revolutionary novelties brought into being by that very science and technology which have

been lifting our continent earthquakewise. They force upon us a radically new technique of conduct. Those of us who master it survive. All others perish.

Tomorrow's success will be the man who adjusts fast and easily to changing conditions. To adjust thus one must be ever relaxed, ever free from tight muscles and closed mind. Hence, you see, whoever would train himself for happy living in the new America must master the art of relaxation. Nimble dexterity depends utterly on skill in this art. To freeze in any one behavior pattern is to doom oneself.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

The past five years have laid bare the profoundest differences between man and man. The world depression swept down upon hundreds of millions of people, wrecked fortunes, broke up homes, exterminated cities, and pricked the bubble of egotism and soaring ambition. All sorts of men, women and children have been exposed continuously to hunger, cold, humiliation, and disillusion. They have been forced to readjust to harsh conditions affecting every phase of their lives. And they have now been readjusting long enough to reveal their deepest personality traits.

Relief agencies, schools and medical centers have accumulated information about the

cases drawn to their doors. Then too, a few isolated observers like myself have, in a small way, carried on more or less orderly studies. Enough, at least, to demonstrate the tremendous sifting and sorting of human types which will end, ere long, in the elimination of many once powerful and in the increase of others once weak and despised.

Who goes under? Who carries on?

What a book might be written around these two questions! Alas, it cannot even be begun yet. The best I can do is to graze its subject at one point on the rim. I can talk about the men and women I have been watching with an eye to their survival and mental health. And I can report cases from relief agencies, clinics and other authentic sources. All straws which show which way the wind is blowing. Nothing more. But if you watch enough straws, and if the wind blows hard, you may learn much.

A gray, bitter January wind almost drowned the tapping on my front door. I admitted a solid man wrapped in an aged overcoat (which must have had fully three owners before it reached this citizen) and wearing on his head one of those dingy flannel caps which lumberjacks use, with long flaps buttoning under his ruddy chin.

In his gnarled right hand he bore a pilgrim's staff fully six feet long and thick enough to fell an ox. The oversized arctics on his feet

were frayed but still warm enough to help. The creature had that elusive thing men call personality. Some flavor of rugged honesty and tough fibre hung about him.

"Do you want to sell that little cottage up back?" he asked with no ado.

Well, we talked about the little cottage until we made a tentative deal. Then I began quizzing him, for he intrigued me.

He had lately moved out into these wild parts. He and his wife liked them. They were a little like their old home down in Maine. Yes, he was a Maine Yankee and had graduated from Yale. Yes, he'd been rich in a small way until 1929, and then . . .

(Here insert the same old story.)

"And now what are you going to do?" I asked.

"I'm starting all over again in the real estate business, because I know it. It's just about time for things to perk up somewhat. This raw country hereabouts ought to be in the line of next development."

"Where are you living?" I asked, for I wanted to get in touch with him soon.

"Up in that shack where the Eigels used to live," said he, just as simply as if his answer had been "1000 Park Avenue."

The Eigels' shack is the filthiest, shabbiest hovel in our poor backwoods township.

Most dogs would turn up their noses at it. 'Tis said no rat tarries there longer than one night.

"But by spring we'll be moving into a better place," said he—in a tone such as you would use if you were to tell me that we're going to have a rainy summer.

"Where's your car?" I asked—and then bit my tongue.

"Oh, I walk. It's better. Keeps the old muscles limber and fit, you know. But maybe next summer I'll get a car. Business'll be lively by then. Well, good day, sir!"

"Do you mind telling me how old you are?" I asked in a manner that showed him I wasn't merely inquisitive.

"Sixty-seven last Thanksgiving. And going strong!"

I watched him stride up over the hill and out of sight, head down into the nippy wind. It was two miles from his shack to town, and another two miles back. Vaguely I recalled having seen him making the trip daily for many weeks.

Sixty-seven, and starting out all over again! Sixty-seven, and serene as any star in summer skies! Sixty-seven, and back in the real estate business, trudging miles and miles over ice and snow!

What have I to offer such a man? Nothing! He has a philosophy of life and a toughness of mind and body which immunizes him

against the jitters, the "nerves," the bad dreams, the restless nights, the dreads of defeat, and all the other spiritual poisons. He would either laugh at this book or else find it as insipid as rain water.

His kind will be thriving centuries after many another has gone the way of the dodo. That old Maine Yankee stock is hackmatack, and the harsh soil and climate of Maine have hewn the stock as Maine shipbuilders hew hackmatack to fit the frames that buffet the winter gales offshore. Add to all this the solid education of New England fifty years ago, and you have a combination which ploughs through seas of adversity like a schooner running down wind in the trades. Old Ironsides!

Zero and sunshine on the steep old hill road below my farm house. As I work away on these pages, I occasionally glance out at the crowd of coasters.

What a good time all are having on this lovely February day! Over the winding dirt, now well packed with frozen snow, the sleds go whizzing for half a mile into the brook bottoms. Never a fear of motor trucks and wagons. No vehicle could climb or descend these snaky grades now.

Toward noon I go out for a yawn and a stretch. Close up to the coasters, I recognize old acquaintances. There are Mr. and Mrs. Friddle and little Jim Friddle. Cheeks aglow, eyes shin-

ing, the trio wave a hello at me as they flash down the hill once more. All morning have they been up-and-downing that road.

Suddenly it dawns on me that the Frid-dles have been on relief for more than a year. Joe Friddle had a small brokerage business which was wiped out back in 1931. His savings kept him alive for another eighteen months, during which he hunted high and low for a fresh start. In those days he was haggard. He couldn't eat nor sleep. His heart began troubling him. Everybody advised him to take it easy, but the poor devil couldn't. A young man—in his mid-thirties—he had his mind fixed upon a career. He had been on his way up, had made quite a little money, was driving two cars—one much better than any I've dared use; and the thought of slipping backward by even an inch sickened him.

In the midst of his nightmares, his wife fell desperately ill and was packed off to the hospital. He couldn't pay her charges there—and that almost crumbled him. Shortly thereafter he fell out of my sight, for I went off on a series of long trips.

And here he was gaily coasting all day, as serene as a star in summer skies. Fine color, happy grin, brisk walk . . . what had happened?

Whatever it was, he had somehow learned to take it easy. He cannot put it into

clear words. He says it's no use trying to stand under Niagara Falls with an umbrella. He hasn't surrendered. Oh, no! He's just drawing a deep breath between rounds. He isn't going to wrestle with tigers. He's waiting until the tigers die or go away. Meanwhile, to hell with worry! His family are living on forty-five cents a day, and are quite well, thank you!

TENSE FAILURES

Now look at those who cannot cope successfully with the world of reality.

The President of the American Medical Association, at its October, 1933, meeting, reported that "The number of commitments to institutions for mental diseases almost parallels the increases in matriculation to colleges." Almost half of the hospital beds in the country are occupied by people having mental disorders. (This may not be so serious as it sounds, since mental patients remain in hospitals as a rule longer than do patients in general hospitals. Even so, as you read these lines, there are 509,000 people in hospitals for mental disorders.) During the past fifty years the population has a little more than doubled; but there are nine times as many admissions to state hospitals as there were half a century ago. Experts reporting in the Hoover study, *Recent Social Trends*, find that "on the average, approximately one

person out of 22 becomes a patient for mental diseases during the life of a generation." Mental diseases afflict men more than women.

In the fall of 1933, New York City was so keyed up by the business depression and the bitter fight to oust Tammany from control that physicians reported an alarming increase of nervous stomach ailments, especially gastric ulcer.

One physician reported that the number of his nervous patients had increased several hundred per cent in the last three weeks of the political campaign. To most of these he said that they would recover when they got jobs and stopped worrying about their future.

Between the ages of 35 and 44, disabling sickness is twice as high as that of children, and increases by almost half from 44 to 54. Digestive, nervous, general, circulatory and kidney diseases are shockingly high. And it is well known that many forms of these derive directly or indirectly from nervous tensions and maladjustment.

The editors of *Fortune*, in their careful study of the nervous breakdown,* report that anywhere from 40% to 70% of the cases that come into the average physician's office have nothing physically or organically wrong with them. Their complaints are purely functional. Many doctors are coming around to the conclu-

* *Fortune*, April, 1935.

sion that these upsets derive from mental and emotional disturbances. Dr. William A. White, of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, D. C., suggests that psychotherapy may even help to enlighten such dark fields of medicine as epilepsy and cancer.

The Wall Street crash of 1929 took a greater toll of health than an epidemic. Said one physician: "The worry and suspense which gripped men was the cause of the largest share of functional nervous diseases during that period."

During the fall of 1933, deaths of prominent Wall Street business men increased shockingly. Most of those who died suddenly were under 50 years old. Business and medical authorities agree that worry, overwork, and uncertainty about the future played a large part in many fatalities. Men were forced to take on additional work, often at home. Some doubled their daily work. Already keyed up through the strain of boom years, these slaves found the added strain too much.

Several doctors employed by bankers and brokers report to me that these over-driven people never let down in leisure, even in good times. They played hard to forget business and used up as much energy here as at their desks. They played indoor tennis and volley ball during lunch hours, and golf after hours.

A prominent stomach specialist tells me

that a patient of his, one of the most prominent executives in the country, is so over-tense during and after every directors' meeting that he gets thoroughly drunk for several days following each session. No wonder that he is a chronic sufferer from stomach disorders.

The relative number of suicides has risen steadily since 1928. In that year, fourteen out of every 100,000 people put an end to themselves. Today the rate is twenty per hundred thousand, the highest in more than twenty years.

And what of the future? Dr. George W. Crile predicts that "the complicated mechanism of our civilization will lay a heavy toll on our brain and nervous system. After 100 years of the struggle in which we now engage, there will appear an increasing number of wrecks."

No doubt. The struggle of today will continue for a century. Says one of the wisest living Americans, "None of these troubles which now afflict us will be solved in the lifetime of any man living today." The human race has entered a new phase. It is ushered in by the revolution of technology. Inventors are abolishing old jobs and old ways of life much faster than they create new work and design new patterns of living. They are upsetting every phase of life. And they will go right on doing so; for nobody can or will halt progress.

Fully 70,000,000 Americans are now

struggling along with bare cupboards and empty purses. Most of them manage to keep alive, by spending their meagre savings or by drawing on the Federal dole, or by working part time on a minimum wage. Of this army, about 45,000,000 are in the families of the unemployed; the others are either idle farm hands and small professional men or else half-time workers with subsistence wages.

Among these unfortunates, millions grow tense as a result of idleness. They have energy to spill. They have work habits which press for action. But they lack jobs. All outlets for energy and habit are blocked. Result? Horrible tensions, at first vague but later as sharp as a lightning flash against a night cloud. Unless some work can be found, these people will explode—literally. Their pent-up energies will blow off volcanically. And then what? Well, guess for yourself. But don't imagine for one instant that you will quiet them down by sweet or stern sermons on the merits of law and order.

These tensions of idleness are, in millions of cases, made worse by the tensions of poor food and too little food; of poor sleep and spurts of over-exertion caused by desperate efforts to reestablish oneself in the shattered economic system. Some observers report shocking tales of malnutrition and all of its sinister by-products, such as alternating listlessness and rage, dull wit, slow learning, and increasing

sickness. They warn the statesman that he must quickly find some wholesome careers for these millions, or face revolution.

As yet, nobody sees how more than a handful of this horde will become reasonably prosperous within the next five or ten years. Indeed, it seems more likely that, as conditions improve, factories will install more productive machines, organize tasks more ingeniously, and thereby turn out more goods with less and less human effort. This trend has long been evident. Will not the need of the utmost economies strengthen it? Most engineers believe so. So do thousands of shrewd workers.

Does all this sound as if I attribute the increasing tensions, mental and emotional disturbances and upsets, neuroses, breakdowns, and other wretched adjustments of the human machine to its outer world to this harsh and baffling era in which we now live? Well, I do, largely. For the sheer number of adjustments which all of us must try to make to the chaotic forces of this New America reaches astronomical proportions. Thoreau once said that "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation." Today that desperation approaches madness.

What escape is in sight? I see only one. Everybody must re-educate himself in a new philosophy of life. This must include the art of relaxation, the art of loafing, the art of putting pleasure before business. Alas, thousands can-

not follow these wholesome rules. For they have been selected from human stocks which were adapted to a different world order.

RESTLESS AMERICA

Everybody declares Americans the most restless people on earth. So there must be some truth in the accusation. Let us dissect it.

An extraordinary combination of influences keeps us on edge. Among these the most potent are our climate, our diet, our immigrant fortune-hunters, our Puritan heritage of ideals, and our matchless multitude of comforts, pleasures, and diversions. Of these, the least understood is climate, so I shall dwell on it at some length, summing up the least controversial discoveries of the dozen or more leading climatologists of Europe and America.

Have you ever leaned backward against the iron wind of a Wyoming winter and, through the murk of hurtling snow, watched the panicky procession of tumble weeds go leaping down gale?

Have you ever quivered like a horse under a whip, as the northern mountains of California go crystal clear and puff great gusts of flame-hot air down at you?

Have you been tossed in a twinkling from sticky sweat and the agony of black flies into a deathly chill, as Lake Superior tears off

the mask of summer and discloses its glacial heart in one of those quick thunderstorms which freeze and deafen you at a stroke?

Have you ever watched the autumn hurricane climb up the New Jersey beaches, chew away miles of shore, gnaw through houses, overturn concrete highways, and devastate a hundred villages?

If you have, then you know what I mean when I say that American unrest is largely a product of stormy weather.

But this tells less than half the story. Uniform climate stimulates us much less than variable. A region where the thermometer moves up and down to the extent of 10 degrees every day is much more exhilarating than one where the mercury stands still. It is also much more healthful than a region where the thermometer jumps wildly up and down over a range of 20 or 30 degrees. So we must combine the band of best temperature with the best variation, which is around 10 degrees. This gives us, as our simplified picture of the perfect climate, a mean temperature band of 40 to 60 degrees, over which daily variations of 10 degrees up or down occur frequently throughout all seasons, running down to 30 degrees on the coldest day and up to 70 on the warmest.

To this picture we must add two more features, humidity and wind velocities. Broadly speaking, high humidity is better than low, ex-

cept at very high temperatures. Contrary to common opinion, the exceedingly dry climate of our Southwest is unfavorable to both mental and physical achievement. Air that is between 60% and 90% saturated with water serves us best of all, with the single exception just noted. As for winds, all high velocities are very bad, if continued for long or if repeated often in the course of a season. When cold, they blow away too much of our body heat and so exhaust our energies; when hot, they dry the water out of our skin, hence out of our blood, change metabolism somewhat, and upset our nervous tone badly.

Now, if you will study the climate map of our country, you will find that in the region where three-quarters of our people dwell the mean temperatures may not greatly exceed the ideal of 40 to 60 degrees, but the variability is much too great, the periods of dry weather are much too long, and the winds rise to considerable velocities much too often. Most Americans work in a climate that overstimulates them.

The summer weather that prevails east of the Rocky Mountains and north of the Mason and Dixon line is a curious mixture of depressing and overstimulating influences. On the sticky hot days so common everywhere in this region save on the Great Plains, less oxygen than usual is consumed; and the blood shifts to the skin, in an effort to cool off. The organs are thus

left with too little blood for vigorous exercise; so various local anemias develop. Now of a sudden a chill wind picks up out of the northwest, home of our blizzards. The overheated body must change all of its adjustments in a twinkling. The blood must flow away from the surface back to the organs. The lungs must pick up oxygen faster. All this throws a quick strain on every part of the human frame. The stimulus is excessive, often harmful.

Recent studies (mostly still unpublished, I believe) conducted by Dr. Clarence A. Mills, of the Cincinnati General Hospital, demonstrate that metabolic and degenerative diseases are much more frequent in climates of such high variability. Above all, he finds the worst breakdown in the three organs which regulate the flow of energy, namely, the pancreas, the adrenals, and the thyroid. His laboratory experiments with rabbits reveal that their adrenals become relatively inactive after prolonged exposure to heat; so that, when suddenly exposed to cold, these glands cannot pick up fast enough to stimulate the liver into releasing the blood sugar stored up in it. The creatures are knocked silly by cold, while they have plenty of glycogen on hand in the liver. If turned loose into the blood stream, this glycogen would speedily warm them up; but the adrenals, which are, so to speak, the valves of the liver reservoir, cannot start up fast enough.

In man, the efforts to turn on the heat in a cold wave and to turn it off as the thermometer rises strain the adrenals and pancreas to the point of breakdown; then come diabetes, toxic goitre, and high blood pressure. The wider and more sudden the temperature changes, the commoner these afflictions. Mills compares their distribution with the American climate map and neatly confirms his theory; for it appears that the area extending from North Dakota down to southern Nebraska kills most people with diabetes, toxic goitre and high blood pressure; and this very area has the widest fluctuations of temperature, the worst winds, and, on the whole, an unfavorably low humidity.

Not everybody breaks down, however. Only the weaker bodies give way. Natural selection controls the longer run of human events, here as everywhere else. Millions of people in such over-stimulating regions have the physique to adjust to the ups and down of sun and air. They become highly flexible and enormously energetic. They develop hair-trigger energy, which goes off fast and on slight stimulus. Hence they find it almost impossible to relax and be at ease. As we are here concerned, not with the sick and the dying, but with the successful survivors, our first point is proved. As we move eastward from the exhausting fringes of the Great Plains, conditions improve rather uniformly. The North Atlantic Coast stimulates its

inhabitants somewhat too much, but not nearly so evilly as the Dakota-Nebraska region. Here people keep moving briskly, dislike sitting quietly, go at games and sports with the hot frenzy of Big Business, grow excited over trifles, and—if defeated—swallow poison or jump off bridges. Neurasthenia and suicide take the place of diabetes and toxic goitre here. Not that they wholly displace the latter, for Mills finds that the distribution of suicides resembles that of diabetes. This does not mean that chiefly diabetics kill themselves; it simply means that the same sort of overstimulating weather causes the two evils.

Since the close of the world war deaths from heart disease per 100,000 of population have increased by nearly 250%. In forty years patients suffering from mental diseases of all kinds have increased by more than 300%, relative to population. Can anybody doubt that most of these collapses spring directly from over-energized muscles and nerves? No other interpretation seems even conceivable, let alone plausible.

American climate in the northeast quarter of our land plays the devil with the sexual urge. First it turns Cupid into a dunce and then it makes him a jumping-jack. Stormy weather lashes the entire endocrine system to peak activity. During this period, young people are over-sexed. Later they sink into a subnormal condi-

tion. Women suffer more in both respects than do men.

It is impossible to stimulate both adrenals and thyroid vigorously without lifting all the other ductless glands to peak performance. So boys and girls attain sexual maturity years before marriage is economically possible. Hence one of two courses is followed: either considerable promiscuity out of wedlock or else Puritanic inhibitions. The former course sets up tensions like anxiety and the pregnancy fear. The latter course induces even worse tensions, especially in young women, who literally blow up in many cases.

Hence the enormous preoccupation of American youth with erotic motion pictures and novels. Hence too the endless babble about sex in newspapers and social gatherings. People bring up what is on their minds. They seek relief by blowing off steam. They betray a cruel inner restlessness, an itch that must be scratched, a half-pain that evokes a shriek disguised as high-strung persiflage about love, marriage, infidelity, venereal disease, and all the rest.

The unrest does not end here. An over-stimulated organ wears out early. We find some evidence—not enough though—pointing to the conclusion that American women in the storm zone burn out much sooner than Europeans and other Americans in the storm free zones. Dr. Clarence A. Mills, in his investigations already

referred to, reports that women of the storm zone seem to lose their peak sex appetite soon after their twenty-fifth year; the result is that, along in their thirties and forties, when women of the calm weather zones are sexually vigorous and keen, these unfortunates show low fertility and weak lust. Naturally this would favor divorce and rob wedlock of all glamor. Set this beside the Census report that, in the past forty years, divorces have increased almost 300% relative to population, while neurotic and neurasthenic cases have multiplied even more rapidly.

Now, in this premature and excessive sexuality during the 'teens and the twenties lies the largest single influence making for the degradation of our high schools and colleges. Everybody knows what a joke these institutions are, if measured by any strict educational scale of values. We spend more cash and get less learning than any other important nation. Indeed, I have sometimes wondered in all seriousness whether we would, as a community, be one whit worse off if we were to close all schools and colleges and to compel parents to train their offspring in the three R's at home. I don't know. But this much is certain: the ordinary girl and boy who go to high school and later to college are intellectually immature largely because sexually premature.

The rage and sex explosions in hot

weather are a purely physiological mechanism. Ask any intelligent person who has ever been "touched by the heat." He knows that his ill temper rises without the slightest conscious anticipation or motive. He literally "sees red" over nothing at all. In its motor phase, the explosion is equally unplanned, disorderly, and irrational. When the deed is done, the heat sufferer eyes the results stupidly and wonders how he ever did it. Or, if he has exploded previously and been forced to devise explanations, he will now be ready with some palpable rationalization.

On several occasions I have taken records of the behavior of large numbers of persons suffering from extreme heat. And the purely explosive nature of their acts, coupled with the curious partial relief the explosions induced, has confirmed the hypothesis I have here set forth. For instance, during the hottest week in the summer of 1920, in St. Louis, I observed several hundred persons in stores, banks, shops, and railway stations. It was in some cases impossible to separate purely physiological equilibrations from irritations caused partially at least by the greatly lowered efficiency in workers. For instance, one ticket agent made so many mistakes in counting change—some of the errors being grossly in his own disfavor and hence not deliberate cheating—that he brought down upon him much fury. A distinguished bank president

was ludicrously impolite to some important clients, and an attorney kicked an elevator boy because he ran past the attorney's floor.

When the body is overheated, the blood rushes toward the surface to give off its excess heat. Now this is the precise opposite of the flow occurring in moments of strong emotion. Intense anger and fear are accompanied by a withdrawal of blood from the surface of the body and its concentration in the main organs, above all in the viscera. What more natural then, as a way of balancing, than the tendency of the overheated person to strive to correct his organic anemia by purely reflex outbursts of fierce emotion? This, indeed, is conspicuous among the inhabitants of hot countries.

Rich are the records of orgiastic habits between Cancer and Capricorn; and they are nearly as complete in countries having sub-tropical climate for a good part of each year, especially where heat and humidity combine to make surface evaporation unusually difficult. African savages regularly indulge in outbursts of fury or of sex. The hotter and wetter their habitat, the stronger this tendency, in general. As most of Africa is high table land or else arid lowland, you find the orgies mostly in the central river and coastal plains. That they are coupled with drunkenness need not confuse us; for alcohol itself is only another drive in the same balancing direction, as we have seen. Like-

wise among the Malays of southeastern Asia and the adjacent islands: and again among the tropical Australians. The outbursts intrude upon many of the tribal customs, giving to the latter the appearance of a highly organized sadism. Consider, as one example out of hundreds familiar to students of anthropology, the appalling brutalities practised upon the novices when they are initiated into manhood and admitted to the "men's house." I would not maintain, of course, that the sole, or even the primary purpose of all such acts is to increase the general physical well-being of those who perform them; but it is clear enough that, given the custom, the individual naturally makes the most of it for his own benefit. He finds free outlet for the maddest impulses. He may knock out the youth's front teeth—or at least certain specified teeth. He may kick and beat the novice, for days at a stretch. He may cut his flesh, whip him, revile him. And there is scarcely a doubt that the ecstasy and ensuing bodily comfort he derives therefrom urge him to rationalize all such violence precisely as the alcoholic excuses his own weakness with a thousand and one arguments about his health or his Personal Liberty or what not.

We have already cited the sadistic impulses of white men in the tropics. Let me add that the summer behavior of the whites in our own Southern States reveal unmistakable parallels to the crudities of the Belgian officials in the

Congo. And so too in other American sections where severe summer heat and humidity occur. The number of murders and assaults and lynchings and similar sadistically colored acts in Chicago, St. Louis, Memphis and other scorching communities is, in some degree, the result of purely physiological processes which, in the larger sense, make for relief from the curses of heat and hence for individual well-being. And the same may be said of the rapes and lesser erotic outbursts which regularly accompany Southern camp meetings and religious revivals. Where social pressures and like conditions prevent the grosser sexual explosions, the religious emotions serve as a poor second best. Broadly speaking, the hotter and stickier the day, the surer will the congregation work itself into a lather of so-called religious ecstasy, as every professional evangelist knows.

The same mechanism may be reversed to good effect, when the emotions are overstimulated and disturb the general bodily condition. Then anything that draws the blood to the surface of the body, thus reducing the hyperactivity within, is a good balance. The hot bath does this, and hence it serves wonderfully in subduing the wild outbursts of the insane. Its function, I believe, has frequently been misunderstood; some alienists have supposed that it does no more than dissolve sundry visceral tensions, but this is a derivative effect, not a pri-

mary one. It causes local organic anemias, hence sub-activity; and this shift in the balance of organic energies is probably what serves to disrupt the harmful tensions.

A huge book might easily be written around the mental and physical manifestations of overdriven Americans; but we must press on (in our restlessness!) to another aspect which will clear up several highly important questions. How about our immigrants of the past thirty years? What does the climate do to them? Before 1900 most people who passed through Ellis Island came from northern Europe, which has a fairly stimulating climate. But during the twentieth century more and more millions have been drawn from the Mediterranean areas and southeastern Europe, where the climate has been gentle, fairly even, warm, and relaxing, if not downright depressing. Both bodies and minds in such a climate take it easy always. People incline to caution, and like nothing better than to sit around and watch time pass. They burn up less oxygen than we, show a lower blood pressure, rarely develop neurasthenia, and only a little more often break down from diabetes, toxic goitre, and arteriosclerosis. On the other hand, they seem to be somewhat more susceptible to acute infectious diseases than the people who dwell in lands of storm and stress. Now thrust such southlanders into New York, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Chicago. Imbue them with the

ideal of making quick fortunes so that they can return to their native vines and fig trees and live like lords on their American savings. What ensues? Ruin, or else a new culling of men with high drive and high tensions.

We have not yet the ingenuity to change our climate. Our engineers are unable to hit upon cheap methods of levelling the Rocky Mountains so that the cool, moist winds of the Pacific can sweep over our continent and turn it into a Paradise. They know no trick of turning aside the Arctic gales that roar down upon our Northwest. Nor can they stay the West Indian hurricane with such a formula. So we must attempt the next best thing. We must reduce the dangerous violence of heat, cold, and wind by regulating our indoor weather; and, side by side with this program, we must perfect the art of seasonal work in the worst regions so that people may escape the worst blasts by moving for a time into regions of gentle air.

Within a few years we ought to extend air conditioning so that every family between Boston and Helena sleeps in cool the year around and works in offices and mills where temperature and humidity are adjusted with high precision to the kind of work done there. This calls for immense investments, I know; but they will show high return, without fail. The travel program may prove harder, but it can be worked out with persistent intelligence. Added

politicians and crustacean business men will certainly fight it along certain battle fronts, for it will lead to depopulation of immense areas, especially in the western half of the Great Plains.

There we find a round half-million square miles totally unsuited to white men who insist upon happiness on a high level of living. The blighted area extends roughly from the foothills of the Montana Rockies eastward to the center of the Dakotas; it runs southward along the Rockies well into northern Texas a little way below the Panhandle, thence eastward almost to the center of Oklahoma. This is the place of horribly hot, dry winds and dust storms in the summer, the area of the tragic drought of the summer of 1934. It is the region of a cruel alternation between blizzards and sunny warm days in the winter. It is a place of little rain and little convenient water for man, beast, and plants. It withers men's skins no less than their spirits. It slays women and children wholesale. Good enough for little dogy, it is not even fit for the poor Indian.

The sooner we make up our minds to turn it back to the sheep and the steers, the better for all concerned. A Federal law forbidding people to settle there except for ranching and mining would help. Luckily few homesteaders and grain growers would have to be dispossessed. The entire rural population of the

region is about 1,500,000, of which fully half might well stay on with the live stock, provided that they concentrated in modernized villages with the finest air conditioning, so that indoor life would not be merely endurable but downright pleasant and wholesome. A regional planning commission could select sites for 150 villages of 5,000 inhabitants each, on the average, and equip these communities with fine climates, either by the use of central conditioning plants or by domestic installations.

Most of us can work well through the hottest weather if only we can get a good night's rest, in a cool room. As houses are now built, however, this is impossible for the mass of humanity. Complete relaxation during sleep is absolutely necessary. To attain it, we must keep the bedroom temperature down around 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Let the temperature rise to 60, and we relax imperfectly—though of course we have no trouble sleeping moderately well. Personally I prefer to sleep in a temperature of 40 degrees, but this is not to be generally recommended, I suspect. Nobody, so far as I can learn, prefers to sleep in a room having 80 degrees or more of temperature.

The incompetence of tropical and sub-tropical workers is due, on the whole, not to the heat in which they toil but rather to the heat in which they must try to rest. Desert people who live at altitudes which chill the night air get

along very well through the blazing days. But down in the Amazon valley, where damp heat never relents, nobody works any faster than absolutely necessary. Between high desert and equatorial river plain we find all degrees of night heat and human listlessness. Our own Gulf States east of the Texas line show the lowest energy output and the poorest achievement records in our own land. Yet it cannot be doubted that their people would accomplish almost as much as a New Englander and at the same time take life easy if we could air-condition every bedroom south of Atlanta and east of Houston. The loss of man power due to hot nights is shocking.

If, then, you happen to live in the region of over-stimulation, do not expect to take life easy as soon as you read this little book. You will have to move out of the region, or else go in for air-conditioning on a grand scale. If, when the blizzards of January descend like hawks upon you, you can sit in a room whose temperature is 60 degrees and watch the driven snow blow out over the prairie, then all well and good!

A TRAVEL BUREAU FOR THE TENSE

Where can tense folks go to relax? Not all America is dangerously stimulating. You can go places. And the good travel bureau might

advise you as to routes and stop-overs, if it had a consulting psychologist on its staff.

The South is, on the whole, best for tense folks. And the far South, for at least nine months of the year, is better than the fringe areas close to the Mason and Dixon Line. Warm air, gentle breezes, much sunshine, and relatively few sudden changes of temperature bless the Slack Belt which runs, broadly speaking, from Charleston, S. C., over to Galveston, Texas. The further west you go in the Slack Belt, the less slack it becomes. Galveston has its tense days, when the Norther blows off the Great Plains and ices these near-tropics for a few hours. Charleston is America's Nadir of Slackness. The only person who grows tense there is the wretch who has to have some work done promptly and accurately. Be it an aching tooth or be it a punctured tire, the lax loafers of this lovely town bungle away at the task in a dream state from which they seldom awaken. God help the stranger who has to have anything done there! Lucky the stranger who chances upon the place when in quest of peace and quiet and an end of worries! If ever I open a sanitarium of relaxation, it will probably be near Charleston—that is, provided that I can equip the place with automatic machines for cooking meals, opening doors, sweeping floors, and doing everything else which lies beyond the power of the natives.

Florida is not the South—as everybody knows. It is Something Else Again; but large parts of it are pretty good relaxative areas, even during moist summers. Northerners who would die of languor in Charleston flourish in the mid-Florida places. Probably this state offers the best refuge of the over-strained in our country, for it has little of the terrific, unbroken heat spells which plague the inland places only a little to the north, while it enjoys evenly tempered sea winds most of the time.

Some parts of California are fairly good relaxatives, but on the whole they have too exciting air or else too great heat for many weeks at a stretch. Close to the ocean is by all odds the best, except at the northern end of the State, where the rains are much too long and too drenching. Further north up the same coast the coolth and wet increase and become more and more stimulating—hence excellent for the ambitious and bad for those who want to let down.

Here and there you find small tracts which our new Travel Bureau might recommend to the tense—such as large areas of the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake or a narrow zone where the Piedmont of the Carolinas meets the mountains. But America, as a whole, is ill suited to ease and forgetfulness. If you want a first-class mental slump, go to Asia and Europe. See our Travel Bureau first, though!

TENSE TOWN

The town slays its own brood. It also empties its cradles. The larger the city, the higher the death rate, as a rule. The larger the city, the less competent it is to maintain itself out of its own births. The larger the city, the more frequent the venereal diseases, illegitimate children, stillbirths, and sterile women. This holds true from Berlin to San Francisco—wherever the white race herds into super-slums under the shadow of skyscrapers and motion picture palaces. No single cause brings this multiple ruin to pass. It has a host of causes.

Smoke, noise, dust, air-borne diseases, drudgery, monotony, breakdown of home life, influx of inferior stocks, infiltration of criminal classes, corrupt politics, severe competition—but the list runs on and on.

So flexible is man that he can get along passably in dirt, noise, stench, and the buffeting of his herd. At least he can do so as long as he sees many of his fellows in the same situation and believes that this is, under the circumstances of his day and place, about as good as anybody may hope for. It is a far cry, though, from such enduring to serenity. Praise the metropolitan mob as much as you will, you cannot—even in poetry—declare it serene. Energetic, yes. Healthy, yes—up to a certain point. Self-satisfied, often. At peace with itself and its

world, seldom; and when it is, you may be sure, on closer scrutiny, to find that its peace is only an armed truce between two wars. The wretched immigrant, fresh from the barbarian slum of Europe, is well pleased with his new slum, for its dirt is much more refined than that of the old. Before he learns a higher living standard, he may be quite content with his progress. If stupid, he may remain long in this pleasant mood. But we have seen most of his kind grow restless of late. The vision of better things has infected them, and they are ready to advance once more.

Here is the inner drive that will disintegrate the super-slums of New York, Chicago, Boston, and Detroit. The great city, we now see, has been merely a wayside camp, a lodging for the night, where weary marchers pause to dig new front-line trenches and to build footings for great guns. The clutter and grime of the place mark its transiency. The army's objective lies far, far beyond. Here is No Man's Land. And ere long it will be inhabited by No Man.

At the dawn of the Machine Age, country people had to swarm into centers where the great machines had been built. Everybody had to go to the sites of power and easy shipping. The map of our Western World during the past two hundred years has been drawn by the owners of waterfalls, deep harbors, iron mines, limestone quarries, and toll roads. Now we are

about to tear up this map and draw a better one. The time has gone when workers must huddle around a few favored spots. Power spurts across the continents now. Highways traverse mountains and deserts. Men are now free to live wherever they like.

Like prisoners who have been shackled many years in a dark dungeon, most of us find our new freedom troublesome. The dazzle of day blinds us. We still feel the irons on our ankles. Our legs, weakened by disuse, totter uncertainly. Our wills are still shakier, after long planlessness. So we shiver when a friend suggests that we close up the dismal old apartment in town and pack off for a fresh start out beyond the daisies.

"I'm no farmer."

"Well, who said you were?"

"But what'll I do in a small village or in the country?"

"Whatever you like—if it doesn't cost a million."

"Hm. Well, I think I'd like—er—"

"Aha! Just as I thought! You don't know what you want. Honest, now, do you?"

Pained silence, framed with hemming and hawing.

The wise family is leaving the great city. Already the exodus is huge. Hundreds of thousands have departed during the past five years. True others have poured into the slums, but

Engineers can silence a town. Physicians can control its diseases. Nurses can care for its sick. Stern officials can some day crush racketeers. They may even prevent profiteering too, though they cannot make living cheap. But they never can end the worst evils of all. They cannot triumph over excitement and unrest. These, the enemies of human happiness, are built into the very structure of the great city. It is in the cities most of all where the underlying crisis in America today is most apparent and demoralizing. Here thousands of nationalities, races, and religious and other cultural groups of the Old World and the New battle openly and fiercely in the War of the Cultures.

CLASH OF CULTURES

If there is an American philosophy of life, it has gone lost in the cloud of dust raised by many warring cultures. Our befuddlement is

horrible. We have few orderly convictions. We do not know where we stand on fundamental matters of living. We cannot guess whither we are drifting, still less to what shores we would like to sail. For our thinking has been confused by the intrusion of all the Old World philosophies, religions, and lesser cults. Each has its noisy disciples who insist that they know everything and have come to teach us poor fools. We have been told that out of this melting pot would come a new and finer philosophy of life, in the wake of a greater America. Time has confounded the prophets. Time has proved that the melting pot brings forth witches' brew.

You cannot compound a philosophy of life as you make a Christmas pudding. You cannot produce something savory if you take a pinch of Spinoza, ten drops of New Thought, a cup of Christian charity, a level teaspoonful of Buddha, and six dried leaves from Yoga, all stirred well in a public forum, sprinkled with Kant and baked hot in a half-baked mind. The stuff stinks. Eat it, and you die. Its atoms are hostile toward one another and will not blend.

Spinoza developed a marvelous philosophy of life—one of the keenest and noblest. Jesus developed another, less intelligent but clear and suited to certain people at a certain time. Buddha fashioned another, so did Kant, and all the others individually. Any one of these is finer than a hash containing a little of each.

But how few Americans have yet grasped this simple truth! Most of us sample all around the table of philosophy, but we eat of nothing in abundance. We allow ourselves to be fooled by the alien horde who urge us to take the best of each doctrine. We do not understand that the best of each may prove to be only the best for the place, time and people of its origin. Torn loose from its setting, it may become foolish or even a lie.

The greatest American Tragedy arises from the fact that our alleged intellectuals have been largely trained in Europe, have received honorary degrees from Old World colleges and governments, have been gaudily decorated and preposterously flattered, and have never taken seriously the problem of thinking out a genuinely American philosophy of life for the twentieth century. Can you name one American who has given us a system which we can apply to today's affairs and can use in our quest of the Easy Way of Life? Is there a college in our land which turns out young people with any such philosophy? If so, please tell me. I want to learn more about it. All I hear is a hundred echoes blending into gibberish.

But what's wrong with the greatest Old World philosophies? All were founded upon presuppositions about man's nature and about the world which we now know to be erroneous at least in part. Science has made all obsolete

and has made some downright silly. Then too, many Old World thinkers were trying to do something which doesn't interest us in today's America. They are not in error; they are merely irrelevant. But we, poor simpletons, take them at face value; allow ourselves to be awed by their reputé, and thus block our own intellectual progress. No Old World philosophy aids us in dealing with those cruelest of ordinary tensions—tensions arising from imperfect efforts to win and hold the good will of people around us on whose approval we depend for our jobs, our Christmas presents, and our epitaphs.

Man's destiny is to be engulfed in a culture, to be immersed in a social atmosphere which he must breathe in order to succeed. If it happens to be a wholesome, natural culture which provides free outlets for his energies and abundant satisfactions for his deepest cravings, then he prospers as a personality; and he may even remain unaware that he lives in a social medium. If, on the other hand, the culture forbids acts which he must perform, he must choose ostracism, clever clandestine satisfaction, or else self-suppression that ends in grave upsets of body and mind.

Primitive cultures fit the individuals beautifully, for they are little more than family and neighborhood customs. These customs spring from the local environment and the human types in it. No wonder, then, that almost

every child born in such a small society absorbs its culture as he absorbs the food and water of the region. Its thoughts become his thoughts. Its ways become his ways, down to the slightest detail of walking, speech, and dancing. So he is at ease in Zion. He has no interest in alien cultures. They are all "crazy" and, of course, ludicrously inferior to his own. Among people of these small societies neurotics and psychotics are almost never found, though various major insanities crop up here and there. This points to an amazingly smooth adjustment of the individual to his place and culture.

What a different scene in America! Here we have seventeen distinct economic areas over which are scattered a dozen strains of African blacks, a hundred or more strains of Amerind and Mongol and Malay, and almost every human variety from Europe's polyglot chaos. In every city save a few all these representatives of unrelated cultures are thrown together in shop and factory, in slum neighborhood and in street car.

Over these diverse groups we find, in somewhat degenerate form, the dominant culture of the early English settlers of North America, whose descendants still retain political power, even where they have lost the economic. The patterns of propriety and compulsion are almost wholly British. So is the language. So is the law. So is business practice. And the result?

A chaos whose like has never been seen before. A clash of customs and attitudes which does nobody any good but hurts all of us. A myriad maladjustments causing vile tensions, with all the desperate striving for satisfaction through strange substitutes and symbols. The silly old theory that America is a melting pot in which the brotherhood of man is being proved is no longer held except in the remote sense that, perhaps five hundred years hence, there may be a single culture and a few North American types of physique more or less suited to that culture. So far as our own age is concerned, the many cultures have not fused. All the stronger varieties are holding their own. Some are even gaining on the dominant British culture. Clashes between cultural groups have not subsided; some observers even declare them to be increasing. Be this true or not, the fact cannot be challenged that our land is a super-slum swarming with unreconciled, suspicious groups.

Countless the interferences between man and man, between neighborhood and neighborhood, between official and citizen, between church and church, between industry and industry, between employee and employee. Each encounter blocks somebody's wish, sets up a tension, and thus raises a problem of relaxation. Ours is notoriously the tensest of all lands; and what the climate has not done to us all these cultures have by way of making life hard.

A NEW PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE—OR ELSE . . . ?

So back we come to our starting point. Americans will never find the Easy Way of Life (Grand Manner) until they shall have worked out a new philosophy of life that serves us well in the new world order. Neither our old Puritan Way nor any of the many Ways trodden by people of the Old World will do. Let us convince ourselves of this, and we shall clear our minds of much rubbish.

Out of our technology and science is growing a world which breaks with all the pioneer traditions. Out of our vigorous and enterprising people arise attitudes hostile to the elemental notions of communism. We cannot walk the Way of Stalin, nor the Way of Hitler, nor the Way of Confucius, nor the Way of Jesus, nor the Way of Emerson. All were designed for other times, other places, other men. All look at life from points of view which we cannot or will not take.

Why do we go on listening to the discards of antiquity? Why do we not attack the problem of evolving our own conceptions and clarifying our own interests? Why do we endure the silly symposia in which a score of Old World thinkers present their views and expect us to choose among them? This melting pot of ideas is a witches' cauldron out of which come stench and poison. It is not a device for clear thinking,

still less for finding an Easy Way of Life in a very hard world chock full of new puzzles.

Unless we find our own Way, we shall die in a trackless wilderness. And later men, coming upon our whitened bones, will take them to be the remains of a species which could not adapt to its environment.

What must you do to be saved? How go about developing a philosophy of life? Let me turn pedant for a moment and lay down your curriculum for the next five years.

You must, first of all, study yourself from head to foot, inside and outside. Next you must study the world you live in. This done, you turn to the toughest task of all: you must fit yourself to your world as ingeniously as possible.

A large order? Well, rather! Not a man in a million finishes the curriculum. I offer you the counsel of perfection, but not hopelessly. I offer it in its stark impossibility so that you may not approach it lightly with the thought that a few days' reading may yield you the wisdom of the ages.

Let us now outline the parts of this program. Begin with a study of your own energies. What is your capacity for doing work? What are your dexterities, your endurances, your breaking points?

After spending a few weeks over your energy output, turn next to the pattern of your

personality. You will find in this pattern all sorts of functions having each its own unique place and influence in the design of your nature as a whole. For instance, your hearing may be more acute than the average, while your eyesight is below par; your memory of colors and forms may be very keen, while your memory of names and numbers may be atrocious. Your hands may be too small to play the piano easily, while your legs may be so long and strong that you can break the world's record as a runner. Many personality analysis charts try to give you the main items and outline of your pattern.

Next you study the exact ways in which your various energies flow through your whole pattern, and just where (if at all) the flow is too strong or too weak, too steady or too irregular to make life easy for you. Now you come to grips with the heart of your personal philosophy. Are, for instance, your eyes over-energized to the point of making it impossible for you to sleep except in total darkness? Or are your ears under-energized to the point of making it hard for you to follow conversations carried on in soft, low tones? Are the heavy muscles of your legs so flooded with impulses that you find it hard to sit still for half an hour at a stretch? Are your associative centers keyed up so that you dare not read or discuss any serious subject after dinner, lest you lie awake for hours after going to bed? These are fair samples

of a thousand questions affecting your final philosophy.

We now reach the end of the first half of the curriculum. We assume politely that you know yourself pretty well. You next advance to a study of the world in which you must somehow work out your own Easy Way of Life. Begin with your own home and neighborhood, then widen your radius of inquiry until you have encompassed the planet. But rely on common sense to check excessive study. Keep ever in mind that time is the essence of life; that you cannot spend ten years analyzing the wheat market in order to decide whether you ought to sell your wheat crop tomorrow or hold it another month. No inquiry can outrun the limit of hours within which action must occur. Bearing this rule in mind, proceed with your personal survey of whatever influences you in business, politics, art, and what not. Never, never, never will you find all the answers. But find as many as you can.

You wind up the whole business whenever you come to the hour of decision in which you must reject or accept people or conditions. Shall you stay at home for the rest of your days, or shall you pack up and get out? Shall you assume leadership in your community, or shall you trail the politicians? Shall you marry a submissive woman, or shall you remain single? Shall you seek an executive position, or shall you take things easy in a subordinate post?

Decisions like these are your own. I cannot advise you about them, for I don't know you well enough. But you may be helped by the underlying facts of psychology and economics which you find for yourself or receive from books and friends. The most I can do is to guide you toward such facts, to point out the directions you must follow in the pursuit of your Easy Way of Life. No map has ever been printed which steers your course. Never will such a map be printed. For each person is unique, and each environment is too.

What a pity that so many folks keep their philosophy of life in cold storage or in moth balls! They look upon it as a fur coat, to be donned only when icy blasts blow. Fatal error! It is not a fur coat. It is bread and butter. It is ham and eggs. It is beer and skittles. We need it every hour, for it is another air which we breathe through our whole bodies, not through lungs alone.

Keep bread and butter in moth balls, and it will serve you ill when you hunger for it. So with your philosophy of life. Unless put to work every morning, afternoon and night, it rusts, cracks, shrivels, and finally breaks down in a crisis. It becomes in fact as useless as most people's religion, which is laid aside in moth balls from 8 P. M. Sunday to 9 A. M. on the following Sunday. It becomes a fair weather friend, and a mocking enemy in bitter hours.

Away with analogies and metaphors! Your philosophy of life is you, you as a personality, you as a system of more or less closely organized conclusions, beliefs, attitudes, wishes, and projects. It is you in a sense even richer than that in which your arms and legs and hair and teeth are you. For, as a psychologist might describe it, your philosophy of life is your entire life, viewed as a behavior pattern which has slowly taken shape within your nervous system.

You may have a moth-ball philosophy of life. You may sincerely believe that you may safely drift in fair weather and take the helm only when storms threaten. In this you are as wrong as Satan, but perhaps it is your nature so to err; if so, then stick to it, lest your hypocrisy slay you. When the devil is sick, the devil a saint would be. Many people are devils. If you are a devil, be a first-class one. Improve your double standard of morals. Use the finest moth balls, so that the worms may not devour your flimsy philosophy of life while it is laid away.

If, however, you belong to the Children of Light, you will discard all moth balls and all cold storage. You will weave a garment for all weathers and climes. And you will wear it through heat and cold. Indeed, you will sleep in it too. And the longer you wear it, the thicker it will get; you will put it in water, and 'twill never get wet. In time, the amazing vesture will become an integral part of your skin, inseparable

and seamless. Between the outer world and your inner self it will become a living fortress, half iron, half blood.

(Do you suppose that's how the rhinoceros got his hide? It may be.)

I hope you sense the drift of these remarks. A genuine philosophy of life is not a luxury for special occasions. It is not a rainy day umbrella to be left standing in the front hall while the sun shines. Neither is it a detachable commodity. It is either a part of you, or it is trash. If you cannot understand this, I suggest that you start your education all over again.

PHILOSOPHIZE OR PERISH!

You can make a very pretty crazy-quilt out of a thousand rags and tatters of worn-out, moth-eaten fabrics—socks, pillow slips, umbrella covers, pants, diapers and velvet draperies. But you cannot fashion a living thing like a philosophy of life by assembling fragments of long dead thinkers and their thoughts, pasting them together and calling it a day's work. You might as well try to give birth to a new species of bird by plucking tail feathers from a stuffed parrot in the museum, sticking these on the rump of a capon picked up at your meat market, attaching the items to the spine of a crow which you shoot in your corn field, and thus slowly merging fea-

ture with feature until a complete feathered biped appears.

We Americans have been doing something painfully like this for many years, and most zealously during the past five or six. Study well our national planners in Washington—and all the lesser luminaries who came to Washington with pet plans only to be cast out into the night. What happened to national planning was the only possible outcome in a land suffering under a clash of cultures as violent as our own. Everybody from Harvard's Frankfurter down to the Hot Dog Manufacturers' Association tossed something more or less whole into the mills of the demi-gods; and these mills ground the stuff exceeding fine—so fine, in fact, that the shrewdest detective cannot identify a shred of it as camel or weasel, onion or rose. The hodge podge contains excellent remedies, but blended these become a poison. Seeking a panacea, the demi-gods hit upon the method of mixing a brew that would contain proved remedies for each known affliction of the human race. Quinine and iodine went into the cauldron along with vaseline, carbolic acid, ipecac, malt sugar, and syrup of figs. He who doses himself with it is already dead.

Let me be quite specific. Our political and our academic leaders have been perpetrating two fundamental blunders. First blun-

der: mistaking particular projects, such as the building of a dam, for a plan. Second blunder: for the sake of getting quick results, compromising with all pressure groups and concocting a program that is packed with flagrant contradictions and ends up with a dull thud. Witness the now famous deadlock between the plans of Hopkins and the plans of Ickes, each founded on a different philosophy of social welfare. Hopkins, the social welfare specialist, is impressed by the importance of the next meal and a lodging for the night; he wishes to spend his billions carrying the needy along from day to day until better times somehow appear. Ickes thinks not of today's meal but of the nation's tomorrow: he therefore wishes to build for the future and let the day go hang. What if somebody does miss a meal, so long as a great bridge spans the Colorado five years hence?

The President, whose outlook on life is predominantly political and personal, looks upon Hopkins and Ickes, as upon everybody else who reaches his ear, as agents of particular pressure groups. The high executive problem is to bring all pressure groups into some dynamic balance so as to achieve at least two results: reduce personal frictions and get some tangible results. Now, this philosophy of pressure groups is a subtle form of the American Crazy-Quilt Philosophy of Life. It is a twisted corollary to the democratic doctrine of power. Everybody

has a right to seek what he wants. He has the right to express his desires to the government and to work honorably for their realization. The government must appraise the importance of each demand in terms of the number of clamorers and the noise they make and the fury they stir up for their cause. In short, it must act according to physics, not according to a philosophy of life. Might makes right. The government is on the side of the strongest lobby. When two or more lobbies show almost equal and opposite forces, the government must merge them into a resultant of forces, whose direction is not that of any single force but a summation of all. And so on.

Today we perish for lack of a philosophy of life suited to North America and its inhabitants. Can we realize our peril in time to think ourselves out of it? I wonder. Can we pause for a decade or two and think? Can we relax intellectually and emotionally, so as to receive clear impressions from the world around us, to form a new picture of events and trends, and to organize our needs and wishes in a plan of action that will work? Let's be gloomy about it, for just one moment. All of our training, all of our fake culture, all of our newspapers and professional politicians stand in the way of genuine philosophizing. Over against these immense forces we have only the agonizing necessity of saving ourselves from disasters much worse than

any which yet have afflicted us. Which drive will prove stronger? The Crazy Quilters or the inner urges of a hundred million people? I must leave the answer to you.

Meanwhile, keep clearly in mind this unchallengeable fact: we must begin our salvation by taking things easy. We must let down, cease straining, and contemplate all things with the submissiveness of the sincere truth seeker. We must dissolve our worries and lesser tensions, be clear, be cool, be unafraid, before we can get our bearings again and set our courses by the everlasting stars.

A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

At fourteen Walter B. Pitkin was making a living herding cattle and delivering packages for a dry goods store in Detroit. From sixteen to eighteen, he worked his way by taking the school census in the Polish district of Detroit and thus made enough to go to college. He supported himself through college by training a prize fighter, by selling class canes to students on a commission basis, and by occasional newspaper work. He studied Greek, Latin, French, German, Hebrew and Arabic as well as philosophy and psychology. From twenty-two to twenty-seven he studied advanced languages and psychology in Europe. Upon his return he began his career at Columbia University.

Mr. Pitkin has been American Managing Editor of the Encyclopaedia Britannica and is now Professor of Journalism at Columbia University. But these stately titles give no idea of the inspiration and delight which thousands of students have found in his beautifully organized scholarship and his talent for tracing the ways of homo sapiens.



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